St. Raphael

Signature Site

Preliminary Strategy

Ontario

106-02870/

November 22, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Ministry of Natural Resources has prepared a preliminary strategy for the management of St. Raphael Signature Site. We are pleased to present the enclosed **St. Raphael Signature Site Preliminary Strategy** for your review and comment. Your input will be considered in the development of the final signature site strategy.

Once approved, the final signature site strategy will provide land use and resource management direction for the protection, conservation and development of natural resources in St. Raphael Signature Site. This direction will be used to develop a park management plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park, and a resource management plan for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.

As someone interested in the management of Ontario's provincial parks and Crown lands, you are invited to participate in the ongoing development of the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy. All comments or suggestions regarding this document or any other aspects of the planning exercise are welcome. Please take the opportunity to submit your comments to the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy Project Team at the address below:

St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy – Project Team
49 Prince Street
Box 309
Sioux Lookout, ON
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or to the following e-mail address:

siouxlookoutdropbox@mnr.gov.on.ca

Your comments will be carefully considered in the completion of the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy.

Yours truly,

Charlie Lauer
Regional Director
Northwest Region-MNR

Adair Ireland-Smith
Managing Director
Ontario Parks-MNR

The Environmental Bill of Rights, the Statement of Environmental Values

In accordance with provisions outlined in the *Environmental Bill of Rights*, the Ministry of Natural Resources prepared a *Statement of Environmental Values*. It describes how the purposes of the *Environmental Bill of Rights* are to be considered whenever decisions are made which may significantly affect the environment.

The primary purpose of the *Environmental Bill of Rights* is "to protect, conserve and whenever possible, restore the integrity of the environment." Consistent with these principles, the Ministry of Natural Resources developed four objectives in its *Statement of Environmental Values*:

- to ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations;
- to ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario;
- to protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance; and,
- to protect human life, the resource base and physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

The Ministry's *Statement of Environmental Values* has been considered in the development of this preliminary strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site.

Our Sustainable Future

The strategic direction provided in the document *Our Sustainable Future* further guides activities of the Ministry of Natural Resources and was also considered in the preparation of the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy. *Our Sustainable Future* confirms the vision of a healthy environment through sustainable development as the overall long-term goal of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The ministry's mission is to manage resources in an ecologically sustainable way to ensure that they are available for the use and enjoyment of future generations. *Our Sustainable Future* also highlights the ministry's commitment to the conservation of biodiversity.

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Prologue

Prior to discussing the Ontario government's approach to land use and resource management in St. Raphael Signature Site, it is important to reflect on past events that have helped shape present-day interests and uses on the landscape. It is also fundamental that the human history of the area be considered to help direct consultation and management decisions for the area.

Early ancestors of the Ojibway have a lengthy history in the area of the signature site. Until the 1600s, Ojibway people or Anishinaabe lived exclusively off the land for food, clothing and shelter. Fishing and gathering of berries, medicinal plants and wild rice occurred mainly in the summer and fall, while winter was a time for hunting and trapping. In Ojibway culture, material goods were not accumulated and everything that was borrowed from the land was used. The Ojibway did not believe in ownership of natural resources, rather they shared with, and borrowed from the land.

Trapping dates back to the beginnings of Ojibway history. Animals were trapped for pelts and meat. Trading of pelts and handmade goods was customary between clan groups. Aboriginal people developed extensive waterway routes to transport and trade goods. These trade routes, and the intimate knowledge Aboriginals had of the landscape, were the foundations on which the historical fur trade was built.

Traditional purposes for trapping changed dramatically with the arrival of the first Europeans in the 1600s. Trappers traveled hundreds of kilometres to trade furs at Hudson's Bay Company trading posts, which began to emerge in the northern Ontario interior in the mid-1700s. Aboriginal people used their knowledge of the land to assist early European traders and explorers; guiding them inland in search of furs and new trade routes. They also built canoes, made snowshoes and provided food in return for trade goods and money.

During the late 1700s and through the 1800s, the Hudson's Bay Company established trading posts and trade links throughout the region, notably at Lake St. Joseph and Lac Seul. The waterways within St. Raphael Signature Site likely served as important transportation routes for furs and trade goods during this period.

Trading with Europeans and the interactions between the two cultures brought about changes in the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle. Their nomadic way of life was being replaced by more permanent communities, often near trading posts. Trade goods began to replace many hand-made tools; rifles replaced the bow and arrow and kettles replaced birch bark containers. Implements such as files, knives and axes made life easier for Aboriginal families. The elders believed technology was a gift not to be abused.

The 1900s saw great change and adjustment for the Anishinaabe. At the turn of the century, men were finding short-term work on railway and road building projects. The discovery of gold in the Pickle Lake area in 1929 also provided some employment. At least 14 companies were operating gold and silver mines by 1937 with each mine employing 50 to 100 people. Advances in technology coupled with increased settlers and setbacks from the Great Depression of the 1930s meant less work. However, Aboriginal people were able to survive by living off the land.

Prior to the development of land transportation routes, lakes and rivers were the main network for transporting goods, services and people in and out of the area. The completion of the Canadian National Railway through the Sioux Lookout area in 1910, expanded transportation to northwestern Ontario and brought the first European settlers to the area. A freight trail once ran through St. Raphael Signature Site to the Central Patricia Mine near Pickle Lake. This trail was originally built to transport supplies to the mine. Later, it was upgraded to accommodate freight trains and tractors. The trail can still be observed in some areas, but is mostly overgrown and has not been active since Highway 599 was extended from Savant Lake to Pickle Lake in 1954. Many of the

early waterway trade routes were later established as recreational canoe routes, including some in St. Raphael Signature Site. Portions of the freight trail have also been used as canoe portages.

Technological advancement was occurring at a rapid rate though the 1900s and the need for power was increasing in western Ontario. Ontario Hydro erected dams on the Albany River, at Rat Rapids and at Cedar Rapids in 1935 to provide more power to western Ontario and eastern Manitoba. The Lake St. Joseph water diversion project in 1957 also provided increased hydro-electric generation potential. These projects caused great fluctuations in upstream and lake water levels which in turn caused severe beaver and muskrat population declines and forced Aboriginal people to relocate from their lakeshore homes.

In the 1950s, trapping was still a main source of income for many people in northwestern Ontario, particularly Aboriginal people. When world demand for furs declined in the 1960s, trapping for trade purposes virtually ceased. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people still hold trap-lines in the signature site area. They trap mostly for beaver, otter, lynx, marten and muskrat. Most furs are sold at auction houses, but some are used to make clothing.

In the early 1940s, commercial fishing began on lakes around St. Raphael Signature Site, largely on Lake St. Joseph. During the 1950s through to the early 1970s, several commercial fisheries existed on larger lakes in St. Raphael Signature Site. Some members of the Mishkeegogamang (formerly Osnaburgh) community held commercial fishing licences and fished waters in the signature site. Aboriginal fishermen sold walleye to various local buyers to supply tourism resorts and mining camps. As commercial fishing and tourism expanded, non-Aboriginal fishermen were competing with the Aboriginal people for resources. By 1985, commercial fishery operations had ceased in the signature site.

The first tourism camps emerged in the area of the signature site in the mid-1960s. Although some of the camps have changed owners over the years, all original camps are still in operation today.

Many Aboriginal people continue traditional activities of berry picking, medicinal plant collection, trapping, hunting and fishing in the St. Raphael Signature Site area, and retain a spiritual connection to the land. Recreational visitors explore the area in search of a remote back-country experience, and in hopes of good fishing. For the people that use the area, whether for traditional, recreational or commercial purposes, there continues to be a strong commitment to continuity and stewardship of the waterways, ecology, and the natural and cultural attributes of St. Raphael Signature Site.

1.0 Context

1.1 Introduction

St. Raphael Signature Site is a remote area of interconnecting waterways and boreal forest, encompassing more than 150,000 hectares in northwestern Ontario (Figure 1). The area exhibits a range of natural, cultural and recreational values and is known for outstanding scenery, remote character, fly-in fishing and circular canoe routes. This combination of characteristics, values and the remote location of the area prompted the St. Raphael landscape to be profiled as one of nine "Featured Areas" or "Signature Sites" in the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (Land Use Strategy) in 1999. It is the preservation and protection of these characteristics and values, while maintaining and balancing traditional, economic and recreational activities and opportunities, which is the focus of the management of St. Raphael Signature Site and this preliminary strategy document.

The signature site contains many lakes connected by the St. Raphael, De Lesseps and Miniss rivers. These river systems intertwine as a result of two geological faults underlying the area, which has created a unique circular waterway. The Pashkokogan River, which flows through Minchin Lake, also links to the main waterway by a portage.

The signature site forms part of the Albany River Watershed and includes more than 400 permanent water bodies and approximately 2,500 km of shoreline. The importance of the St. Raphael area as a meeting place has long been recognized by Aboriginal people. The presence of many old portages and cultural areas demonstrates this.

The lands and waters within the St. Raphael Signature Site are assigned to two land use designations: a provincial park and an enhanced management area. St. Raphael Provincial Park, a waterway class park, includes many of the waterways and shorelines in the signature site. This park surrounds a remote landscape that has been designated as the Miniss Enhanced Management Area: a remote access enhanced management area. The area surrounding the signature site is managed as a general use area by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

This preliminary strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site has been prepared as a high-level direction statement which will guide the development of a park management plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park and a resource management plan for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. The strategy will provide the overall vision for the signature site area and land use level and resource management direction for the component land use designations. This document clarifies and expands on direction provided in the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*, and refines and builds on land use intent developed through the Land Use Strategy planning exercise.

Current land use direction for St. Raphael Provincial Park and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area exists in the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas[1] (*http://crownlanduseatlas.mnr.gov.on.ca*). Area specific policy for the park and the enhanced management area will be amended in accordance with direction in the final signature site strategy.

Resource management plans prepared for the signature site must be consistent with direction contained in the final signature site strategy. The Ministry of Natural Resources will assist internal and external clients in developing land use and/or resource management plans and with plan amendments as necessary, to help ensure the direction in the final strategy is applied consistently and appropriately.

1 The Crown Land Use Policy Atlas is the official source of area specific land use policy for Crown lands in a large part of Ontario. It is also a central location for finding proposed changes to land use direction. It is available on the Ministry of Natural Resources internet site, and is available for purchase on CD or in print.

Staff of various program areas of the Ministry of Natural Resources (e.g. Ontario Parks and Field Services Division) will work together to ensure values in the signature site are preserved and protected when making land use decisions.

1.3 Vision Statement

The vision statement defines the long-term strategic direction for the signature site area. In recognition of the natural, cultural and recreational values of St. Raphael Signature Site, its remote character and the economic importance of the area to local communities and the Province of Ontario, the vision statement for the St. Raphael Signature Site is:

> *'To preserve and protect the remote characteristics and unique values of the St. Raphael Signature Site, while maintaining and balancing traditional, economic and recreational activities and opportunities.'*

In the context of this vision statement:

- *"preserve and protect"* means to perpetuate through time, the characteristics and values of St. Raphael Signature Site that define it as a special place in Ontario. The vision does not mean that all of these characteristics or values require formal regulated protection, but that they need to be considered as land use and resource management decisions are made.
- *"remote characteristics"* are those attributes that contribute to a sense of isolation from the outside world. A sense of remoteness can be enhanced if an individual has expended great effort to access an area and encounters few people. It can also be influenced by visual disturbances, noise levels, evidence of human influences over the natural environment, and geographic location within the province.
- *"unique values"* are features which are significant or rare[2]. They also include natural heritage features[3] and cultural heritage features on the signature site landscape.
- *"maintaining and balancing traditional[4], economic and recreational activities and opportunities"* means that St. Raphael Signature Site has a history of use and potential to accommodate future use within its landscape.

1.4 St. Raphael Signature Site

Nine signature sites were created throughout central and northern Ontario as part of the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (Land Use Strategy) in 1999. Each signature site combines a variety of land use designations and demonstrates a range of natural and recreational values, providing opportunities for integrated resource management planning. The Land Use Strategy provided direction on individual land use

2 Significant and rare features are determined through provincial protocol and through formal inventory

3 Natural heritage features are features of the natural landscape (e.g. plant species or community, geological features, species at risk)

4 Traditional activities refer to sanctioned activities that occurred on the landscape prior to the creation of the signature site

areas, and identified the scope and general management direction for each signature site. This has guided the development of objectives and direction for the management of St. Raphael Signature Site as outlined in this preliminary strategy.

St. Raphael Signature Site displays important natural and cultural values, and has significant tourism and recreation values. The area has natural heritage features typical of the boreal forest of northwestern Ontario, with some of these features considered to be locally to provincially significant or rare.

Conifer and conifer dominated mixed-wood stands comprise 70 per cent of the forested landscape of the signature site. A portion of this forest resource has been allocated for forest management activities. The signature site also has geology which may be of interest to the mineral exploration and mining sectors.

St. Raphael Signature Site is unique in both its size and configuration. The site is made up of a sizeable enhanced management area surrounded by a provincial park. A designated general use area surrounds the signature site. This signature site provides an opportunity to demonstrate how varying land uses can be planned and carried out concurrently. Planning will focus on integrating activities in the signature site so commercial activities can occur, while signature site values are protected and remote characteristics are maintained.

1.5 St. Raphael Provincial Park

Provincial parks are set aside to achieve a range of objectives to protect natural and cultural heritage values, and to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, heritage appreciation and tourism. St. Raphael Provincial Park was one of 61 provincial parks established in the Land Use Strategy. It was regulated as a waterway class provincial park in 2003.

Waterway parks incorporate recreational water routes with representative natural features and historical resources, and are meant to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences. The focus of waterway parks is almost entirely on aquatic and shoreline (including back-shore) environments.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has a target to establish at least one representative waterway park in each of the province's 71 ecodistricts[5]. St. Raphael Provincial Park is the representative waterway class park for Ecodistrict 3S-5.

A portion of St. Raphael Provincial Park will be designated as a natural environment zone to satisfy the natural environment park class target for Ecodistrict 3S-5. This zone will include natural, cultural and aesthetic landscapes in which minimum development is required to support low-intensity recreational activities, and will be a minimum of 2000 hectares.

An *Interim Management Statement* for St. Raphael Provincial Park was completed in 2001. This document, in combination with the final signature site strategy once complete, will guide the use of natural resources and activities in the park until a park management plan is completed. A management plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park will be completed subsequent to the finalization of the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy. The park management plan will direct protection, management, operations and development of the park.

5 Ecodistricts are geographical units that subdivide the province into areas with characteristic patterns of landform features.

1.6 Miniss Enhanced Management Area

Enhanced management areas have special features or values which require more detailed land use direction to guide recreation and resource uses. In some areas, certain uses may be subject to conditions that are designed to protect values that make the area special. The Miniss Enhanced Management Area was one of more than 80 enhanced management areas established by the Ministry of Natural Resources in 1999. It was categorized as a remote access enhanced management area.

Remote access enhanced management areas are intended to maintain the remote character of selected areas. Typically, these are relatively large areas that provide high-quality remote recreational experiences including hunting, angling, canoeing and camping. Selective commercial activities are permitted; however, enhanced planning of these operations is required. Remote character will be retained primarily through establishing standards for the location, use or abandonment of (commercial) roads and trails.

1.7 Description of Planning Area

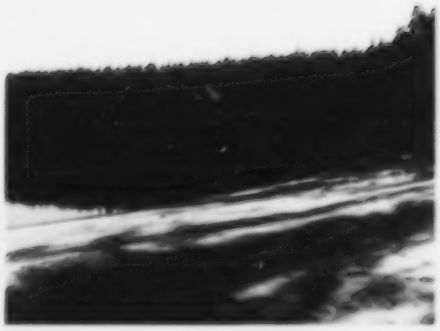
1.7.1 Regional Setting and Access

St. Raphael Signature Site is located in northwestern Ontario, within the Sioux Lookout administrative district of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The signature site can be accessed along Highway 599 which commences at the Trans-Canada Highway 17 in Ignace. Another access route via Highway 72 extends from the Trans-Canada Highway at Dinorwic to the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. From Sioux Lookout, travel is northeast on Highway 516 which ends at Highway 599 just 10 kilometers north of Savant Lake (see Figure 1). From the Township of Pickle Lake, the signature site can be accessed by traveling south on Highway 599 for approximately 85 kilometers.

There are a limited number of forestry roads in the vicinity of the signature site in the surrounding Sioux Lookout General Use Area. Roads in proximity to the signature site will be decommissioned to prevent public use after forest renewal activities have been completed (as outlined in the Caribou Forest Management Plan 2002 to 2022). Forest management roads to the south of the signature site in the vicinity of Lawson Lake, are also not available to the public for access to St. Raphael Provincial Park. Signs are located on primary forest access roads stating this road use restriction.

Travel to remote areas of the signature site is commonly by floatplane with local service available out of the Savant Lake and Sioux Lookout areas. Several local tourism operators also provide air taxi services. To the south of the signature site, Via Rail Canada provides passenger service to Savant Lake and Sioux Lookout.

Established canoe routes follow the waterways surrounding and within the signature site (see Figure 1). Water routes link to Lake St. Joseph and the Albany River system to the northeast. Connections can also be made to Sioux Lookout using the Marchington River system, to Lac Seul via Lake St. Joseph, and to the waterways of Wabakimi Provincial Park.



The meeting of two geological faults created the circular waterways within the signature site. The importance of the site as a meeting place has long been recognized by Aboriginal people and is evidenced by many old portages. Coincidentally, from biblical teachings, St. Raphael is the patron saint of many things including travel, good health and happy meetings.

1.7.2 Local Communities

The closest communities to St. Raphael Signature Site are the Aboriginal communities of Mishkeegogamang First Nation to the north, and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen to the south. Other local communities include the Township of Pickle Lake, the hamlets of Savant Lake and Silver Dollar, and the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. Residents of communities in proximity to the signature site have close cultural and traditional ties to the natural environment and enjoy outdoor pursuits in the area.

Services are available seasonally in all communities along Highway 599 for fuel and food items. There is a hotel in Savant Lake just off the Highway 599, and a hotel in Silver Dollar which is open seasonally from late spring to early autumn. Pickle Lake has full services including medical facilities, automobile repair shops, goods suppliers, lodging, food and fuel. Sioux Lookout is the largest community in the area, and offers full retail, transportation, government and medical services.

1.7.3 Aboriginal Communities

The community of Mishkeegogamang First Nation is located on Lake St. Joseph and Doghole Lake approximately 20 kilometres north of the signature site. The reserve, previously called Osnaburgh village, was relocated from its original location on Lake St. Joseph in 1960 to provide the community with access to Highway 599. Some members of Mishkeegogamang First Nation reside off the reserve in areas traditionally used for trapping and hunting; as far south as Lac Seul and as far north as Windigo Lake. Native habitations are found both within and adjacent to St. Raphael Signature Site. People of Mishkeegogamang First Nation use the signature site for hunting, trapping and other traditional purposes.

Several generations of Aboriginal people from Ignace and Lac Seul have hunted and trapped in the Savant Lake area. This group first settled on land along Highway 599, in the community formerly known as the Savant Lake Indian Settlement. In 1997, a new reserve for the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen was designated. The main settlement is to the north of Kashaweogama Lake, which is to the southeast of the signature site. Members of the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen trap, hunt and fish in the signature site area.

1.8 Signature Site Strategy Planning

1.8.1 Planning Stages

This preliminary strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site has been developed as part of a comprehensive planning process, complete with Aboriginal input and public consultation at each stage of development. The planning stages are as follows:

1. Development of the Terms of Reference (March 2003)
2. Invitation to Participate extended to the public (March 2003)
3. Information collection and development of a Background Document (January 2004)
4. Development of an Issues and Options Document (November 2004)
5. **Development of a Preliminary Signature Site Strategy (current stage)**
6. Completion of the final *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy*

Several inventories were also conducted to support strategy development. These included a *Resource Recreation Inventory* for St. Raphael Provincial Park, and a *Life Science Inventory* and an *Earth Science Inventory Report* for the signature site. A collection of Aboriginal values in the signature site was also undertaken by Mishkeegogamang First Nation.

1.8.2 Planning Participants

A district-based project team was established to lead the preparation, production and distribution of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy*. This project team was supported by a planning team, made up of individuals from government agencies with various complementing specialties, as well as a member of Mishkeegogamang First Nation. An advisory committee of local stakeholder representatives and Aboriginal participants was appointed by the Ministry of Natural Resources Sioux Lookout District Manager, to further support the planning process for the signature site (see Appendix A for a list of project team, planning team and advisory committee members).

1.8.3 Planning Succession and Consultation Opportunities

In January 2003 the Terms of Reference for the signature site strategy was developed. In March of that same year, a public *Invitation to Participate* (in the signature site planning process) was provided to local communities (including Aboriginal communities), stakeholders, provincial interest groups and the general public.

During the following year considerable research was conducted. The *St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document* was prepared incorporating this data, considering input from the appointed advisory committee and interested citizens. In January 2004, the Background Document was presented in the communities of Pickle Lake, Mishkeegogamang First Nation, Savant Lake and Sioux Lookout, through a series of information sessions and workshops.

The Background Document is a reference document which provides more detailed information about the natural, cultural and recreational values and uses of the signature site.

Background information, combined with further input from the public and the advisory committee, supported the preparation of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document*, which was completed in November 2004. Another series of public information sessions were held in the aforementioned communities in December 2004. Further opportunity to comment was provided through the mailing of over 350 documents and questionnaires to individuals on a mailing list put together during this planning process, as well as through a proposal announcement on the *Environmental Bill of Rights Registry*.

This preliminary strategy is the fifth of six stages in the higher-level planning process for St. Raphael Signature Site. This document has been developed considering input provided by the advisory committee, local Aboriginal communities and the public (see Appendix B for a summary of public consultation from the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document*). The final stage of the signature site planning process will result in an approved *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy*. This document will provide long-term strategic direction for the signature site, and will support and direct future resource management planning.

1.8.4 Aboriginal Involvement

St. Raphael Signature Site overlaps the treaty area of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (Treaty # 9). A portion of the signature site also overlaps the documented territory of Treaty # 3 peoples. Communities of the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen (Treaty # 3) and Mishkeegogamang First Nation (Treaty # 9) have affirmed that land encompassed by St. Raphael Signature Site is within their traditional use area. Members of these communities have strong ties to the waters and land that make up and surround the signature site. The Ministry of Natural Resources recognizes the importance of Aboriginal culture and traditional land use.

The involvement of the local Aboriginal communities was requested at all stages of development of the signature site strategy. Three representatives of the Mishkeegogamang First Nation participated as advisory committee members. One representative also participated on the planning team. Participation by the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen was sought throughout the planning process; however to date, participation has been limited. Contributions from Aboriginal people have been integral to the development of the St. Raphael Signature Site Preliminary Strategy, and will be vital in future land use and resource management plans that are developed for the signature site.

The project team has made efforts during this process to communicate with Aboriginal people, in a manner which recognizes their tradition of sharing information orally. Participation will continue to be encouraged to assist with subsequent resource management and park management planning.

1.8.5 Economic Opportunities for Aboriginal People

Economic opportunity for local Aboriginal people and communities was an important focus in the planning for St. Raphael Signature Site. This preliminary signature site strategy identifies and builds on business opportunities and positioning of Aboriginal people who have interest in benefiting from resource management and future operations in the signature site area. Some examples include:

- ensuring opportunities for Aboriginal involvement in the preparation of the signature site strategy, and management plans for the park and the enhanced management area
- commitment to support Aboriginal communities so they may benefit from opportunities that may become available through facilities development, operations and maintenance projects in St. Raphael Provincial Park
- exploring resource-based tourism opportunities in the signature site area; and
- working with the local forest industry to ensure continued involvement of Aboriginal people in forest management related activities in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area

Early in the planning of St. Raphael Signature Site, the Ministry of Natural Resources provided funding for a collection of Aboriginal values in the signature site area. This was undertaken by members of the Mishkeegogamang community, and the information has been considered in signature site planning. Further partnership opportunities such as this may arise as management strategies for St. Raphael Signature Site are implemented (e.g. portage clearing; fisheries work).

In January 2004, a *Statement of Understanding* between Mishkeegogamang First Nation, the Ministry of Natural Resources (including Ontario Parks), Sioux Lookout District, was signed. The statement established a process to develop partnerships and provide funding to enable Mishkeegogamang First Nation to examine economic development opportunities that may become available through signature site planning. The purpose of this *Statement of Understanding* was to build capacity within the community through economic opportunities (e.g. tourism opportunities) associated with St Raphael Signature Site, should they be feasible.

1.9 Signature Site Highlights

St. Raphael Signature Site exemplifies the diverse landscape and pristine waters found in northwestern Ontario. The area supports several significant landscape features, and wildlife and vegetation species that are both rare and representative of the region. The signature site displays a rich cultural heritage and offers a diverse array of recreation opportunities. The Background Document provides greater detail on the information provided in this section.

The signature site lies within the Canadian Shield. Two major linear fault lines contribute to the unique characteristics of the area. The Miniss River fault bisects the signature site and meets the St. Joseph fault in the northern extremity of the signature site. The Miniss River fault is one of only two north-eastern trending fault lines in Canada and is considered provincially significant due to its extent

and accessibility. The Churchill Lake batholith[6] feature is also considered to be provincially significant. The bedrock geology of the signature site contributes to geological representation targets of the provincial parks system.

Surficial geology has been shaped by repeated glaciation over the last two million years. The signature site offers an excellent range of landform complexes and features. Eskers are common throughout the signature site, and are diverse in size and morphology. Particularly interesting landform features include the "birdsfoot" esker formation and a double tombolo[7], both located on the south shore of Medcalf Lake. These features are within St. Raphael Provincial Park. The fluted till moraine between northeastern De Lesseps Lake and Medcalf Lake is also significant.

The signature site contains an extensive waterway system of over 400 permanent water bodies including at least 12 larger lakes. Water bodies are interconnected by portions of the St. Raphael, Miniss, De Lesseps and Pashkokogan River systems. The waterways link to Lake St. Joseph and on to the Albany River system, and to the Cat River and Marchington River systems. The abundance of lakes and rivers offer more than 2,500 kilometers of shoreline.

Twenty-one fish species have been identified in lakes within the signature site. Species include pike, walleye and lake whitefish, which support a high-quality sport fishery. Bait resources found throughout the signature site include various species of shiners and darters. One provincially rare species, a river darter, was reported in Churchill Lake in 1974; however, there have been none documented since. Historically, lake trout and lake sturgeon occupied some of the lakes in the signature site, however recent inventories indicate these species may no longer exist.

6 A batholith is a large mass of (plutonic) igneous rock that has been exposed by the erosion of surface rock. This feature has an exposed surface area of more than 100 square kilometers and reaches to unknown underground depths.

7 A tombolo is a sand spit which has joined two pieces of land which were previously separate (e.g. an island to the mainland). A double tombolo is formed from two separate sand spits which build from one land-mass, joining it to an adjacent landmass at two points.

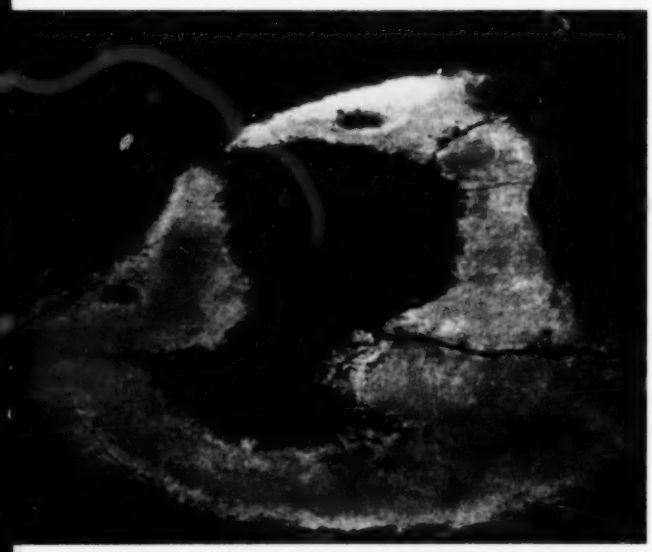
At least 17 species of mammals use the signature site including moose, woodland caribou, black bear, pine marten, lynx and timber wolf. Over 80 bird species, three types of frogs, one snake species and 21 dragonfly and damselfly species have also been documented. Two bird species and four dragonfly species are considered provincially rare, and two bird species are considered regionally rare. Seventy-three bird species are known or presumed to nest in the signature site. Nesting sites for sandhill cranes, bald eagles, common terns, buffleheads, osprey and herons either have been documented or are likely to exist in the signature site, and are of importance. Bald eagles are listed as an endangered species in Ontario. The signature site provides habitat suitable for wolverine; another species at risk in the province.

Forest-dwelling woodland caribou are threatened in Ontario. This species (named boreal population) is also ranked as threatened in Canada. The signature site has important woodland caribou winter and summer range, much of which is protected within St. Raphael Provincial Park. Records of caribou sightings and sign indicate that use is mainly in the western portion of the signature site with concentrations being found in the southern portion of St. Raphael Lake, and in the southwest portion of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Many of the large lakes provide important spring/summer habitat for cow-calf pairs.

Known caribou calving sites and nursery areas are located on islands and peninsulas of Churchill, Miniss and Payne lakes. It is highly probable that islands on Hooker, Vincent and De Lesseps lakes are also occupied by caribou during the spring and summer for calf rearing.

Vegetation in the signature site is typical of the boreal forest environment. At least 290 vascular plant species have been observed. Due to the unique physiography of the area, several significant species have flourished under ecological conditions uncommon in the region. Four provincially rare and ten regionally significant plant species occur in the signature site, with five others noted as being locally significant.

Open wetlands comprise up to two percent of the signature site and are primarily characterized by treed bogs found in kettle holes or bedrock depressions, and poorly drained flat areas. Peatlands of black spruce swamp with sphagnum moss are scattered throughout the signature site. Cedar swamps can be found in limited areas where there is ground water seepage. An extensive 180-hectare peatland complex exists south of Medcalf Lake and is considered significant due to its size and representation of several wetland communities. A black ash swamp is found in the northwest of St. Raphael Lake and is considered an area of importance to Aboriginal people.



Black spruce and jack pine dominated forest stands make up at least seventy percent of the forest overstory of the signature site, with some hardwood and mixed stands growing on upland areas and in river valleys. Forests on river floodplains exhibit the greatest species diversity and support many species at the northern limit of their range. Small pockets of old-growth red pine stands on Hooker Lake are also at the northern edge of their native range and are considered significant. Some individual trees are over 300 years old.

St. Raphael Signature Site demonstrates long-standing use by Aboriginal people and early settlers. Evidence includes pictographs and ceremonial sites, an Aboriginal village on Miniss Lake (which was in use until the 1970s), sites associated with trade routes during the 1800s, trails used for freight hauling in the early 1900s, and established portages.

Recreational opportunities within the signature site include angling, hunting, canoeing and camping, motorized boating, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, wildlife viewing and more. The area provides a remote wilderness environment complete with outstanding scenery. Circular water routes provide for backcountry canoeing and support an exceptional sport fishery. Sand beaches provide ideal areas for shore-lunches and back-country camping.

In the 1920s, a number of lakes in and around the signature site were named by the Ontario Surveyor General. The lake names followed an aviation theme, with many being named after pilots lost during World War I. St. Raphael Lake was named for the plane downed on a trans-Atlantic flight. Hamilton Lake, which lies adjacent to the signature site, was named after Captain Hamilton who was the pilot of St. Raphael, and Minchin Lake after Captain Hamilton's co-pilot, Colonel Frederick Minchin. De Lesseps Lake was named after a pioneer in Canadian flying, Count de Lesseps, who perished in his plane flying over the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Medcalf Lake was named after Lieutenant James Victor Medcalf, a pilot also lost during World War I. Around the 1950s more lakes were named in response to revision mapping for this area, many after World War II casualties.

Other lakes in the signature site and surrounding area were named after Hudson's Bay Company employees, including Vincent Lake and Lawson Lake. Hooker Lake was named after Claude Hooker, who staked the eastern shore of Pickle Lake in the 1930s and built the general store in 1934. The name of Miniss Lake comes from Ojibway origin meaning 'island'. Spirit Lake and Ghost Lake were local names on maps dating back to at least 1908.

2.0 *Planning Challenges and Land Use Objectives*

2.1 Planning Challenges

Planning and managing the St. Raphael Signature Site in a manner that achieves the vision of *preserving and protecting remote characteristics and unique values, while maintaining and balancing traditional economic and recreational activities and opportunities* presents a number of challenges. The consideration of these challenges helped frame the land use objectives and set the management direction contained in this preliminary strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site.

The planning challenges were identified through a variety of mechanisms. Initially, challenges evolved out of early planning processes associated with the development of the Land Use Strategy in 1999, when land use intent was being established for St. Raphael Provincial Park and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Others were identified by Sioux Lookout District staff, based on their familiarity with the signature site area and resource use. The advisory committee, interest groups, local Aboriginal communities and members of the public also brought forward matters of concern during the review of the Background Document and the Issues and Options Document for St. Raphael Signature Site.

The configuration of St. Raphael Signature Site presents a unique challenge. Waterway parks in Ontario are typically linear in nature, rather than circular as with St. Raphael Provincial Park. The circular waterway park surrounds lands where industrial activities are permitted. This has caused planning challenges since access is required through the park in order to carry out operations in the enhanced management area.

The challenges summarized in this section provided direction for the development of strategies and opportunities that will result in improved management, protection and wise use of St. Raphael Signature Site. A list of comments provided that were outside of the scope of this initiative will be provided in the final signature site strategy. Some of these comments may be recommended for future consideration.

2.1.1 Summary of Planning Challenges

Aboriginal Interests
- Constitutional and treaty rights must be respected
- Identification and protection of traditional use areas
- Identification of economic benefits for Aboriginal people from the signature site
- Balancing protection of important areas with development activities
- Need for an effective consultation process, and for further relationship building with each Aboriginal community in the signature site area

Access
- Protection of remote characteristics and other signature site values, with road development across St. Raphael Provincial Park and in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area
- Enforcement of public motor vehicle restrictions on industry roads
- Unknown location and level of motorized use of recreation trails

Adjacent Lands
- Protection of signature site values while permitting resource and recreation activities on lands adjacent to the signature site

Cultural Heritage
- Limited knowledge of cultural heritage sites hinders ability to protect and conserve these areas
- Restrictions on viewing sensitive data often result in poor understanding of where cultural heritage resources are located and their significance
- Effects of road corridors through the park, on cultural heritage areas (e.g. portages)
- Preservation of historic trails and camps which are growing over

Earth Science
- Impacts from increased recreational activity within the park and the construction of industry roads in the enhanced management area, on significant surficial geology features
- Impacts related to the removal of sand and gravel from significant surface features in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area

Fisheries
- Management of the fisheries resource with limited physical fisheries data
- Management of sport fish harvesting in an interconnected waterway
- Preventing introduction of exotic fish species (e.g. non-native bait species)

Forestry and Mining
- Impacts of industry roads on portage trails and canoe routes
- Providing clear direction for industry to operate in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, which will balance the needs of industry, maintain remote characteristics and protect signature site values

Park Operations and Zoning
- Potential use restrictions and other park policies to protect signature site values, need to take into account existing uses and infrastructure
- The long-term development and operation of St. Raphael Provincial Park needs to be explored

Recreation
- Improvements to recreational access and facilities must protect signature site values and retain remoteness
- Reducing conflicts between recreational user groups
- Disposal of human waste and litter

Tourism
- Impacts of industrial activities on remote tourism values
- Balancing tourism opportunities and back-country recreation
- Reliance of tourism industry on fisheries resources
- Need for improved dialogue with tourism operators to work towards common goals for the signature site

Vegetation
- Conservation of rare, significant and sensitive species in the signature site (e.g. red pine stands in St. Raphael Provincial Park)
- Preventing further introduction and spread of non-native/invasive vegetation species
- Preventing inadvertent herbicide application in St. Raphael Provincial Park from the adjacent enhanced management area and general use area

Water Quality
- Improve coordinated efforts of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment to measure and monitor water quality
- Limited knowledge of potential sources of water pollution

Wildlife
- Protecting species at risk
- Identification and conservation of rare and important habitat (e.g. sandhill crane nesting sites, caribou calving islands)

2.1.2 Building Stronger Relationships with Aboriginal Communities

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to continual relationship building with local Aboriginal communities. Dialogue will continue with Aboriginal people regarding their involvement and partnership in natural heritage protection and management, as well as other economic opportunities that may develop.

Some factors cited by Aboriginal people as hindering relationship building include the process the Ministry of Natural Resources has for managing and allocating natural resources, interference with the exercise of constitutionally protected rights (e.g. the impacts of timber harvesting on fur harvesting activities), and challenges of developing economic ventures because of government protocol. Throughout the planning process for St. Raphael Signature Site, there were further concerns expressed about the adequacy of the consultation framework applied to signature site planning. Considerable efforts were made by the Ministry of Natural Resources towards attempting to respond positively to these matters (see Appendix B for summary of Aboriginal consultation).

2.2 Establishing Strategy Objectives

Land use and resource management objectives were established based on the vision for St. Raphael Signature Site. These objectives were presented in the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document*, and were refined in this preliminary strategy based on public review. All of the objectives relate to the overall vision to preserve and protect the remote characteristics and unique values of the signature site, while maintaining and balancing traditional, economic and recreational activities and opportunities.

The following objectives will guide management and use of St. Raphael Signature Site.

Aboriginal Use
- To ensure that traditional resource use by Aboriginal peoples is recognized and respected
- To facilitate Aboriginal people in pursuing economic opportunities identified within the signature site

Adjacent Lands
- To ensure signature site values are not negatively affected by activities on adjacent lands.

Cultural Heritage
- To protect cultural heritage resources
- To provide education materials on historical uses of the signature site

Earth Science
- To protect significant earth science features
- To promote significant earth science features

Energy
- To support small-scale non-commercial renewable energy development, consistent with the vision of the signature site

Fire Management
- To maintain the diversity and distribution of natural vegetation species and communities on the signature site landscape through use of fire, with respect to safety, social and economic effects

Fisheries
- To sustain healthy native fish populations
- To allocate the fisheries resource appropriately

Forestry
- To ensure forestry operations are carried out in manner that protects remote characteristics and unique values of the signature site

Fur and Bait Resources
- To ensure commercial fur harvesting and bait operations are conducted in respect of signature site values

Land-based Access
- To make access available for recreation and commercial uses while maintaining remote characteristics and protecting unique values of the signature site

Mineral Exploration and Mining
- To encourage mineral exploration and mining activities that respect signature site values

Recreation
- To maintain remote recreational opportunities
- To provide limited front-country recreational opportunities
- To identify opportunities for education and interpretation of the signature site values

Tourism
- To ensure ecologically sustainable and remote resource-based tourism operations within the signature site

Vegetation Management
- To protect rare, significant and sensitive vegetation species and communities
- To maintain the diversity and distribution of natural vegetation species and communities
- To limit the introduction and proliferation of non-native/invasive species

Water Quality
- To ensure no degradation of water quality occurs from signature site use or development

Wildlife
- To contribute to wildlife sustainability on a landscape level
- To protect species at risk and their habitat

3.1 St. Raphael Signature Site Land Use and Resource Management

The following land use and resource management direction has been developed from government mandate and policy, scientific information and public input. Further guidance was provided from public review of, and comment on the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document*. The direction provided in this preliminary strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site supports conservation and ecological sustainability for the area, and strives to meet the needs and some of the wide-ranging desires of local Aboriginal people, the public and stakeholder groups.

The land use and resource management direction for St. Raphael Signature Site is presented by topic in the following sections. The overall intent related to the objectives for the signature site is provided for each subject. Management strategies that support the objectives are then described. Strategies will be refined in the subsequent park and enhanced management area resource management plans. Other land use and resource management plans for the signature site area must be consistent with the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy (e.g. fisheries management plans; forest management plans).

The direction in this preliminary strategy does not preclude legislative, regulatory or other policy requirements. The direction is not intended to replace, but rather enhance provincial guidelines used in resource management planning.

3.1.1 Aboriginal Use

St. Raphael Signature Site overlaps traditional lands and waters of two Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities have indicated they use the signature site area for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering and travel. In addition, individual Aboriginal people live in and adjacent to the signature site. These uses may continue, subject to public safety, conservation and other considerations.

An information guide for Aboriginal people will be developed which will summarize the signature site planning process and attempt to answer questions raised during signature site planning. The guide will also provide details of how Aboriginal people have been, and may still get involved in signature site planning and management.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will work with Aboriginal people to identify economic opportunities in the signature site area (see Section 1.8.5: Economic Opportunities for Aboriginal People). The ministry will also continue to identify and document sites of cultural significance in the signature site, which will be considered in management planning (see Section 3.1.3: Cultural Heritage).

3.1.2 Adjacent Lands

Lands designated as Sioux Lookout General Use Area surround St. Raphael Signature Site. A full range of resource and recreational uses, governed by existing legislation, strategic land use direction and provincial policy, can occur in this general use area.

Activities in the adjacent general use area have the potential to impact on values within the signature site. Specifically, remote characteristics could be affected by activities that occur adjacent to the signature site. The planning of activities in the adjacent general use area should consider the implications of these activities on the ecological, recreation, tourism and other values in the signature site, and mitigate impacts where ever feasible. This will be done through existing planning and approval processes.

Direction

Ontario Parks will work with the Sioux Lookout District MNR staff when reviewing local level land use and resource management planning projects adjacent to the signature site to protect signature site values. Measures to reduce potential effects to the signature site should be centered on maintaining remote characteristics and protecting sensitive park values. The remote characteristics will be maintained primarily through the prevention of unplanned access to St. Raphael Provincial Park. Prescriptions or conditions for activities in the adjacent general use area will be designed to protect signature site values and will be described in resource management plans (e.g. forest management plans), or attached to work permit, land use permit, or other disposition documentation.

3.1.3 Cultural Heritage

Local communities in the vicinity of the signature site are home to many Aboriginal families and descendents of European settlers with a long history in the area. Protection of Ontario's cultural heritage is important in the management of St. Raphael Signature Site.

The protection and appreciation of cultural heritage resources[8] is one of the objectives of the provincial parks system. There are also requirements to conserve cultural heritage resources on other Crown lands established through legislation, policy, guidelines and various agreements.

The land use intent for cultural heritage in St. Raphael Signature Site is to protect cultural heritage resources. Further research, documentation and public education of cultural heritage resources is advocated. The tourism sector is encouraged to incorporate cultural heritage interpretation and appreciation into tourism ventures.

Direction

Elders in Aboriginal communities have passed on cultural tradition through oral history for generations. Some of this history has been communicated and documented for St. Raphael Signature Site as part of cultural inventory work conducted during forest management planning, and from information gathered through signature site planning. The Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to locate, identify and document sites of Aboriginal cultural significance to assist in future resource management planning and project implementation. There are also cultural heritage sites associated with early trading and settlement such as portages and trails used for freight hauling. Identification of these sites will continue and will also be considered during management planning. Archaeological and other cultural heritage sites may be vulnerable to disturbance therefore the specific location and identity of sensitive areas will not be made public.

All confirmed cultural heritage resources (e.g. registered archaeological sites) and sites of high cultural resource potential will be protected in the signature site. Cultural heritage resources will be preserved in situ wherever possible, by avoiding these sites as park facilities or activities in the enhanced management area are planned. Where preservation is not possible, a cultural heritage assessment will be required and acceptable mitigation measures will be employed. Cultural heritage sites will be placed in appropriate zones in the park management plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park. Existing facilities may be relocated if there is a demonstrated negative impact to cultural heritage resources.

Cultural heritage resources are usually identified by federal or provincial agencies, municipalities, Municipal Heritage Committees or other equivalent local heritage groups, or local or regional Aboriginal band councils. The significance of a cultural heritage resource is determined through an assessment by a qualified archaeologist or cultural heritage specialist.

Where there are significant cultural heritage resources in an area, an archaeological assessment will be mandatory prior to any site development or activity

8 Cultural heritage resources are any resource or feature of archaeological, historical or traditional use significance and may include terrestrial or underwater archaeological resources, structural remains or cultural landscapes.

which will result in considerable ground disturbance (e.g. road construction involving soil disturbance, aggregate pits, landings, camps and staging areas). Confirmed cultural heritage values within these areas will be treated as described above.

Interpretive opportunities at access points, camping areas and along portage trails will include an element of cultural heritage appreciation. Existing and future tourism operators and outfitters will be encouraged to incorporate cultural heritage appreciation into their businesses. This may involve use of traditional canoe routes and portages, or the re-creation of authentic Aboriginal heritage and historical experiences.

3.1.4 Earth Science

Earth science features are defined as the physical elements of the natural landscape, created by the earth's processes. They are distinguished by their composition, structure, and internal and external form. Earth science conservation relates to the protection of selected, representative features of the province's geological history and its physical expression on the landscape in a system of protected areas. St. Raphael Signature Site contains provincially, regionally and locally significant bedrock and landform features which are largely located within St. Raphael Provincial Park.

Commercial tourism and recreation have had minimal impact on earth science features in the signature site. Features exposed along lake shorelines may draw signature site users, increasing foot traffic and camping. There are earth science features in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area that may be of interest to the mineral exploration and mining sectors.

The land use intent for earth science features in St. Raphael Signature Site is to protect significant earth science features, and to promote these features through public education.

Direction

Significant and sensitive earth science features will be protected within St. Raphael Provincial Park. Although it would be difficult for recreational activities and tourism operations to cause physical impact to earth science features in the signature site, increased use may cause issues such as improper waste management. New tourism facilities will not be permitted on significant earth science features. New park facilities (e.g. camp sites) will be planned in consideration of aesthetics where on or near significant earth science features (e.g. the double tombolo and the "birdsfoot" esker on Medcalf Lake). Interpretive information on earth science features in the signature site may be displayed at access points, shore-lunch sites, camping areas and portage trails. Information brochures or other materials may be developed promoting significant earth science features in the signature site. Existing and future tourism operators and outfitters will be encouraged to incorporate earth science appreciation into their tourism programs.

Significant bedrock features in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area include the Churchill batholith and the Miniss River fault. A landform feature of significance is a fluted till plain in the east EMA parcel. These earth science features are not easily impacted by most human activities. Protection of significant earth science features is achieved through the provincial parks system, therefore formal strategies to protect earth science features in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will not be developed in the resource management plan. Sensitive landform features will be avoided where possible during planning of access roads and aggregate extraction sites.

Commercial aggregate extraction will not be permitted in St. Raphael Signature Site. Aggregate extraction will be permitted in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area where essential for exploration and mining activities, and for industry road construction and maintenance. The enhanced management area resource management plan will provide direction on location and size, and on rehabilitation requirements for aggregate extraction sites. Alternative sources of aggregate outside of the signature site should be used where feasible. There are older inactive aggregate pits adjacent to Highway 599 in the signature site. These will be considered during planning for the park and the enhanced management area.

3.1.5 Energy

At the time it was established, there were no energy generation facilities nor any energy-related infrastructure within St. Raphael Signature Site. Small-scale (non-commercial) renewable energy developments may be supported in the signature site if compatible with the maintenance of remote characteristics, and protection of natural, cultural heritage and recreation values.

Direction

3.1.5.1 Power Generation

Commercial power generation is not permitted in St. Raphael Provincial Park. Ontario Parks may consider the use of renewable energy systems for supplying the park's energy needs (i.e. facilities related to operating the park), where it proves more economical and environmentally feasible than other forms of generated electricity.

In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, the potential for waterpower production is very limited due to the uniform topography and few large river systems. The potential for commercial wind power development is also considered to be low. Commercial waterpower and wind power development is not permitted due to the long-term negative impacts to remote characteristics from energy-related infrastructure (e.g. power lines, generating stations).

Small-scale non-commercial energy systems to generate power for tourism facilities on land use permits or Crown leases may be considered if compatible with signature site values.

3.1.5.2 Utility Corridors

Corridors for new energy transmission or communication lines may be necessary to maintain essential public services to communities north of St. Raphael Signature Site. For example, the Township of Pickle Lake has been examining the construction of a second hydroelectric power line to the town site from other power grids south of the community; possibly from Sioux Lookout or Ignace. Construction of utility corridors for energy transmission and communication lines is discouraged in the signature site, but will be permitted if no reasonable alternatives exist. The impact of construction and maintenance of corridors on wildlife, water quality, vegetation diversity and public access within the signature site must be considered in proposals for such projects. The Ministry of Natural Resources will review any such projects to ensure development in St. Raphael Provincial Park is minimized, and impacts to signature site values are mitigated where necessary.

3.1.6 Fire Management

Wildfires have been an important ecological influence in St. Raphael Signature Site. Earlier large fires have been a factor in the makeup of the even-aged boreal forest which dominates the area. Small fires have been recorded in the signature site in the last century, with the largest being recorded in 1996; a fire which burned over 8,000 ha in the Medcalf and Miniss Lake area.

The land use intent for fire management is to maintain the diversity and distribution of natural vegetation species and communities on the signature site landscape through use of fire, with respect to safety, social and economic affects.

Direction

Although fire has occurred on the signature site landscape, fire dependent species such as red pine have not regenerated successfully in all areas. Since old-growth red pine stands are features of significance in the provincial park component of the signature site, management action to induce forest regeneration through the use of fire will be explored during park management planning. This will be done with the intent to maintain the diversity and distribution of natural vegetation species and communities on the signature site landscape.

The *Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario* establishes strategic direction for fire management in Ontario. The signature site is located in the Boreal Forest Management Fire Suppression Zone, in which the protection of human life, property and natural resource values (e.g. wood supply) are priorities. Fires in this zone will generally receive a full fire suppression response. The park management plan will provide additional direction on fire response in St. Raphael Provincial Park, where fire may have a positive impact on ecosystem health.

In addition to fire response planning, prescribed burning is another technique that can be used to reintroduce fire to a landscape. Prescribed fire in St. Raphael Provincial Park will be considered in the park management plan with consideration of park and adjacent land values. The use of fire as a management tool in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area may also be applied in resource planning with consideration of adjacent land values. Plans for prescribed burning will be developed in accordance with the Ministry of Natural Resources guidelines and environmental assessment requirements.

3.1.7 Fisheries

Aquatic resources in St. Raphael Signature Site draw anglers to the area. Fishing for walleye and pike is a very popular water-based activity. The primary user groups include resident anglers, Aboriginal people and guests at remote tourism facilities.

Physical fisheries data for water bodies within the signature site is limited. Information from previous survey work was analyzed by the Ministry of Natural Resources to estimate the annual sustainable fisheries harvest levels for 14 of the larger lakes in the signature site. Results of modeling analysis indicated that the walleye fishery is over-allocated on six lakes in the signature site, with others reporting limited capacity to support additional fishing pressure.

The overall intent regarding fisheries in St. Raphael Signature Site is to ensure healthy native fish populations are sustained. Fisheries allocation will also be examined.

Direction

The Ministry of Natural Resources will undertake a fisheries scoping exercise to determine appropriate measures to support fisheries management in St. Raphael Signature Site. Part of this exercise will include examination of:

- methods to collect physical fisheries data
- identification of sensitive spawning areas
- fisheries allocation
- development of a business reporting framework for tourism operators
- fisheries rehabilitation if necessary

This exercise may lead to the development of a fisheries management plan or a fisheries stewardship plan[9] for the signature site. Tourism operators will be encouraged to support fisheries management projects through cost and resource sharing partnerships. Partnerships with non-government organizations will also be considered to assist with fisheries work.

Fisheries-based tourism operators on lakes that appear to have low or decreasing fisheries capacity will be contacted to discuss fisheries issues, resource conservation and individual business logistics. Sustainable fisheries management education will be a priority.

Modifications to sport fish management practices (i.e. harvest control systems) will also be examined. Strategies may include permitting only the use of barbless hooks or artificial lures and/or setting conservation limits through regulation changes. Any modifications will be developed in consultation with the stakeholders, Aboriginal people and the general public.

The allocation of the fisheries will consider Aboriginal subsistence needs. Capacity will then be provided to resident anglers, and then to tourism operations. The fisheries action plan will further define these levels, which may be refined over time as more information is gathered. No further fisheries allocations for tourism purposes will be made available until fisheries capacity is confirmed.

When St. Raphael Signature Site was established, there were no commercial fishing operations occurring. Commercial fish harvesting operations will not be permitted in the signature site.

Live bait has been used for sport fishing purposes in the signature site. The possession or use of bait for angling in low-intensity use waterway provincial parks is prohibited under Ontario provincial parks policy. The purpose of this policy is to limit the potential of importing and transferring exotic species. St. Raphael Provincial Park is considered a low-intensity waterway because there is a low concentration of facilities. During park management planning, consideration may be given to phasing out the use of live bait, allowing only the use of preserved bait, or allowing only bait species harvested in St. Raphael Signature Site to be used within the park.

The federal government is proposing to prohibit the import, manufacture, and sale of lead sinkers and jigs used for recreational angling. Should this occur, it is expected that the availability of these products will rapidly decrease, and use will be phased out of Canadian waters. The promotion of lead-free fishing gear will be included as part of informational material developed for the signature site.

9 A fisheries stewardship plan is a written document listing activities that enhance fisheries resources (e.g. in areas of water quality and stream rehabilitation), and provides public awareness/education opportunities. The plan will generally lay out responsibilities for stewardship activities. Activities may be conducted exclusively by members of the public (e.g. stakeholders, interest groups, school groups), or jointly by the pubic and the government.

3.1.8 Forestry

At the time St. Raphael Signature Site was established, no large-scale commercial timber harvesting had occurred. Evidence of selective red pine harvesting around the turn of the twentieth century has been documented; however, the extent of early logging operations is unknown.

Commercial forestry operations are permitted in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area component of St. Raphael Signature Site. The intent regarding forestry in the EMA is to ensure operations are carried out in a manner that protects the remote characteristics and unique values of the signature site. Achieving this objective will be essentially tied to maintaining the remote nature of the signature site through techniques that provide for a functionally roadless area. The enhanced management area resource management plan will be developed consistent with the Land Use Strategy intent that there will be *"no impact on wood supply, and only in exceptional cases will wood costs be affected"* as a result of modifications to resource management practices in enhanced management areas.

Direction

Forestry operations in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will be carried out through sustainable forest management practices consistent with government protocol. A planning focus will be the preservation of remote characteristics of the signature site. A key component to achieve this is careful access planning, which is further discussed in Section 3.1.10.1: Land-based Access – Roads. Forestry operations will be carried out in a manner that minimizes the number of areas under active operation at any one time.

The planning of forestry operations will consider timing windows, slash pile management, revegetation requirements for gravel/borrow pits and push-outs, and other mitigation for noise and visual affects. Additional direction will be provided in the enhanced management area resource management plan regarding forestry operations in the signature site. The park management plan will contain direction on access development and closure of industry roads through St. Raphael Provincial Park (see Section 3.1.10: Land-based Access). Prescriptions will be designed to supplement existing forest management guidelines, with a focus on the preservation of remote characteristics and unique values of the signature site. Forest operation compliance monitoring will assist in achieving the vision for the signature site.

Forest renewal and vegetation control techniques will be employed which support maintenance, enhancement and protection of signature site values. Alternatives will be examined, particularly adjacent to the irregular provincial park boundary (e.g. mechanical brushing). These will be explored further in the park and enhanced management area resource management plans. Aboriginal communities will be directly notified prior to the commencement of any herbicide spray program in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Commercial Herbicide use is not permitted within St. Raphael Provincial Park.

3.1.9 Fur and Bait Resources

There are active commercial fur harvesting and bait resource operations in the signature site area. Eleven commercial trap-line and 17 bait harvest areas are located entirely or partially in the signature site. The intent for commercial resource harvesting in St. Raphael Signature Site is to ensure operations are conducted in a sustainable manner, and in respect of signature site values.

The Ontario Fur Managers Federation assists the Ministry of Natural Resources in managing Ontario's wild fur program. The group administers certain components of the program including licencing, compilation of mandatory harvest data and the delivery of the mandatory trapper education program. This partnership will be important in the management of fur resources in the signature site.

The Bait Association of Ontario works jointly with the Ministry of Natural Resources to manage bait resources in Ontario. This partnership will assist long-term sustainability of bait resources in St. Raphael Signature Site by providing a leadership role in promoting responsible resource management through training, inventory management and resource planning and development.

Direction

3.1.9.1 Fur Harvesting

Active licence holders will have continued traditional access and use of the signature site with some limitations within St. Raphael Provincial Park (e.g. commercial fur harvesting will not be permitted in Nature Reserve Zones for non-Aboriginal trappers). Established trails used to access trap-lines in the signature site will be authorized provided they are not causing negative environmental impacts or safety issues. Relocation of trails and cabins will be subject to review by the Ministry of Natural Resources (see Section 3.1.10.2: Trails). Construction of new cabins to support operations will be permitted in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area in consideration of signature site values. Boat caches for commercial fur harvesters will be considered on an individual basis. No new fur harvesting operations will be authorized in St. Raphael Provincial Park; however, the transfer of an active licence is permitted.

Active trap-lines are considered by the forest industry in preparing their harvesting schedules for areas in the signature site. Forest operations may require modifications to timber harvest areas, to allow commercial fur harvesters continued utilization of their trap-lines, particularly where in pursuit of forest dependent species.

3.1.9.2 Bait Operations

Bait harvesting is permitted to continue in the signature site, but may be subject to conditions in the management plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park (e.g. bait operations will not be permitted in Nature Reserve Zones). Motorized use of authorized trails and traditional use of waterways to access bait harvest areas is permitted in the signature site. Relocation of trails to access bait resources will be subject to review by the Ministry of Natural Resources (See Section 3.1.10.2: Trails).

The construction of cabins for bait resource harvesting may be permitted in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area if there is a demonstrated need. Such applications will be reviewed and authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources as part of the land use permitting process. New boat caches for bait resource operations will be considered on an individual basis. No new bait harvest area licences will be issued for blocks in St. Raphael Provincial Park. The transfer of an active licence is permitted.

3.1.10 Land-based Access

St. Raphael Signature Site can be reached by air, through connecting lakes, rivers and established portages, and by road from Highway 599 (see Figure 1). Direction provided in this section addresses land-based access only. Access by water and air are discussed in Sections 3.1.12 and 3.1.13: Recreation and Tourism.

Prior to the establishment of St. Raphael Signature Site, trails for commercial fur harvesting, bait block access and black bear management activities were located at low densities throughout the area. One tourism operator was granted authority for construction of a winter access trail from Highway 599, to service an establishment now located in St. Raphael Provincial Park. Modest recreational trails to access the signature site waterway were established from Highway 599. Other trails for recreation and other uses may also have been established over time. No roads associated with forestry, mining or other industrial activity existed; however, there were logging roads in the general use area to the northwest and south of the signature site.

The primary land use intent for access in St. Raphael Signature Site is to maintain the remote characteristics and protect unique values of the signature site. This will be achieved by minimizing impacts of roads and trails on the physical and visual landscape through limited well planned access for recreation, and by providing direction for commercial access.

Direction

3.1.10.1 Roads

Provincial park policy allows for road crossings of waterway class provincial parks where necessary to maintain commercial forest operations outside park boundaries. New roads in the St. Raphael Signature Site will be permitted for forestry and park purposes where necessary. Roads for advanced mineral exploration, development and/or production are permitted in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Generally, roads across parks to access mining claims or leases outside of the park are not permitted. However, St. Raphael Signature Site has a unique configuration in that the EMA is almost entirely surrounded by the park, making portions of the EMA inaccessible unless the park is crossed. Access for the purposes of mineral exploration or mining in the portions of the EMA that are surrounded by the park, will be permitted through the park on existing forest access roads or approved access corridors, and must comply with road standards developed in the park and resource management plans.

Access roads for other commercial users (e.g. fur harvesters, bait resource harvesters, tourism operators) and for private use will not be considered in the signature site. Motorized use of roads will be permitted by authorized users only (e.g. to gain access to active forest harvest or renewal areas), and to perform road maintenance and deactivation. Motor vehicle use of roads by the public, prospectors or other resource users will not be authorized. Enforcement and monitoring of road use restrictions will be a priority.

As previously discussed in this document, St. Raphael Signature Site presents a unique arrangement of two land use components; a circular waterway park that almost entirely surrounds an enhanced management area which is broken up into three separate land parcels (see Figure 1). Due to this configuration, the forest industry will require access across St. Raphael Provincial Park in more than one location to access resources in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.

Roads into the Miniss Enhanced Management Area through St. Raphael Provincial Park will only be permitted via three access corridors (see Figure 1). Only one road crossing of the park from the general use area will be active at any one time, with rare exceptions such as access requirements for mining activities which are not concurrent with forest operations, or in emergency response situations. The intent is to limit areas under active operation to support preservation of remote characteristics, but not to preclude necessary works. An archaeological assessment will be required if disturbance is proposed in an area where significant cultural heritage resources exist.

One permanent access road from Highway 599 to the northeastern portion of the enhanced management area (Payne Lake area) (see Figure 1) will also be permitted. Additional access corridors through St. Raphael Provincial Park to access resources north of the signature site will not be considered.

Roads in the signature site will be kept to a minimum number and density, follow existing corridors where possible (e.g. mining roads use road bed of old forestry roads) and will be developed to a minimum standard in keeping with approved engineering practices. Roads will be selectively deactivated and/or rehabilitated (e.g. portions of road corridors through the park) following the completion of resource management activities (e.g. after a 20-year forest

management planning cycle; after mineral exploration and mining activities are complete). Design and construction of roads will facilitate effective access controls, road closures and rehabilitation, and must consider signature site values (e.g. designed to maintain remote characteristics).

Access management provisions for route planning, road design and construction standards, access control measures and decommissioning/rehabilitation of roads in St. Raphael Signature Site will be included in the park and enhanced management area resource management plans. Considerations will include aesthetics, wilderness values (particularly with respect to caribou habitat conservation), public safety, operational feasibility and cost to industry. Direction will be developed in consultation with industry representatives. Road applications must be accompanied by the access information requirements listed in section 3.1.10.3.

The planning for forest access road crossings into the western and central portions of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area may commence prior to the completion of the park management plan, as land use support for these crossings already exists*. Advice will be provided to the forest management planning team, as access direction is developed during management planning for St. Raphael Provincial Park and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. This will ensure access management strategies for the signature site are integrated into forest management planning. Forest management plans must conform to direction provided in management plans for the park and the enhanced management area once completed.

3.1.10.2 Trails

For the purpose of the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy, trails are narrow linear corridors (generally less than three metres in width) with natural surfaces (i.e. no fill material supporting the trail base). Trails are generally built for a specific purpose for short-term use (e.g. forestry skid trails; trails to access a mining claim), or for a longer period of time such as for some commercial and recreational uses (e.g. trails to lakes in bait harvest blocks and canoe portage trails).

The use of snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles will only be permitted on trails authorized for motorized vehicle use in St. Raphael Signature Site. An authorized trail is one that is identified in the park management plan or in the enhanced management area resource management plan. Trails that have traditionally been used for commercial fur harvesting, bait harvesting operations and bear hunting services will become authorized unless environmental values are threatened.

Trails identified for recreation or other uses will be reviewed individually and may be authorized if location and level of use supports the vision for the signature site. Trail information will be collected from existing users by the Ministry of Natural Resources to support access management planning in the signature site. Trails which are not authorized will be closed and may require access controls and some rehabilitation.

* In 2002, the Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board (OFAAB), as part of its deliberations on commitments in the *Ontario Forest Accord* (1999), provided recommendations on the number and location of primary forest access roads required to access the Miniss Enhanced Management Area through St. Raphael Provincial Park. Two primary road corridors across the park were selected for consideration: a crossing between Vincent Lake and Ghost Lake to access the western portion of the EMA, and a crossing between De Lesseps Lake and Lawson Lake to access the central portion of the EMA. (The crossing between Vincent Lake and Ghost Lake was included as part of the 2002-2022 Caribou Forest Management Plan). These two access corridors across the park were independently reviewed and selected through the St. Raphael Signature Site planning process. In the absence of an approved park management plan, planning for these two crossings can proceed in conjunction with forest management planning processes, as land use support is provided in the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas policy report for St. Raphael Provincial Park. No access development can occur prior to the approval of the final St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy.

While existing trails will be considered for authorization in St. Raphael Provincial Park, no new trails will be considered for motorized use. New trails for non-motorized use may be considered. Relocation of established commercial resource harvesting trails in the park may be permitted if there is a demonstrated need. Such applications must be accompanied by the access information requirements listed in section 3.1.10.3. Proposals will be reviewed individually by Ontario Parks and Sioux Lookout District Ministry of Natural Resources staff.

In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, new commercial and recreational trail proposals will be reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources as part of an access management plan (e.g. forest management plan road use strategy), a work permit application, a disposition request and/or a development proposal. Decisions will be governed by the need to protect signature site values such as caribou habitat, fisheries resources and remote characteristics.

Policy on planning and (possible) development of trails in St. Raphael Signature Site will be provided in the park and enhanced management area resource management plans.

3.1.10.3 Access Information Requirements

Broad access management considerations and careful access planning, in and adjacent to St. Raphael Signature Site, will be important to support the vision for the signature site. Below is a list detailing specific information that will be required in a proposal for a new road or trail, or in a trail relocation application, in or adjacent to the signature site. Through standard access planning and application processes (e.g. forest management planning; work permit to build a trail for fur harvesting) the following points must be considered and documented:

- Purpose of road or trail
- Access location/mapping; relation to other existing roads
- Season of use
- Anticipated term of use
- Standard of road/trail (e.g. width of travel surface and right of way; surface material)
- Stream crossing requirements/proposed structures
- Impacts on unique values (e.g. significant earth science features; sandhill crane nesting sites)
- Potential affects on remote characteristics
- Impacts to other signature site users
- Mitigation efforts
- Anticipated maintenance requirements
- Deactivation plan

This information will be reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources in consideration of existing legislation and policy. Road and trail information will be held in a Ministry of Natural Resources database. Sensitive information will not be made available to the public.

3.1.11 Mineral Exploration and Mining

St. Raphael Signature Site has geology which may be of interest to prospectors and those in the mineral exploration sector. Mineral exploration and mining activities are permitted in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, but are not allowed in St. Raphael Provincial Park. Mineral exploration and mining will be carried out in the enhanced management area, in a manner that considers signature site values.

Direction

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is the lead agency for mineral exploration and mining activities in Ontario. The Ministry of Natural Resources undertakes review of various activities related to mineral exploration and mining activities, such as road construction and water crossings. Such a review will ensure proposals respect signature site values and the direction in the final signature site strategy.

Guidelines for (mineral) exploration activities in enhanced management areas have been developed by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, in conjunction with the Ontario Prospectors Association and the Ministry of Natural Resources. The intent of these guidelines is to encourage mineral exploration and mining operations which promote the conservation of recreational and natural values in

enhanced management areas. These guidelines will be included in the resource management plan for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. The Ministry of Natural Resources will support the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines in the facilitation, promotion and transfer of these guidelines to the prospecting community.

3.1.12 Recreation

Activities enjoyed by recreationists within St. Raphael Signature Site include hunting, angling, canoeing, camping, heritage and nature appreciation, boating, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. A major highlight of the signature site is the expanse of circular waterways which are ideal for back-country canoeing.

In keeping with the vision for the St. Raphael Signature Site, recreation use and new development will be planned to minimize impacts to signature site values. Recreational use of the signature site must be compatible with other land uses and resource management objectives (e.g. camping is incompatible near active woodland caribou calving areas).

The overall intent for recreation in St. Raphael Signature Site is to maintain remote recreational experiences and provide limited front-country recreational opportunities which respect ecological, cultural and wilderness values. Opportunities for education and interpretation of signature site features will be explored.

Direction

Recreational activities enjoyed in the signature site may continue with respect for sensitive ecological values and public safety. Where conflicts arise between recreational user groups (e.g. between motor boat users and back-country canoeists) measures may be taken to reduce these conflicts. Measures may include restricting all or portions of some water-bodies to non-motorized boat use, and the identification (or relocation) of shore-lunch sites off main canoe routes. These measures will be identified in the park management plan. Conflicts associated with recreational uses in the enhanced management area will be managed as necessary.

Established canoe routes will be retained which are safe and support the vision for the signature site, and may be enhanced through limited maintenance (e.g. improving portages). Traditional remote campsites along water routes, which can withstand repeated use and are not in conflict with caribou calving or other significant natural features or values, will continue to be available for use. Development of new back-country campsites is permitted and will be explored during management planning in consideration of natural values. Partnerships will be sought with tourism operators, outdoor recreation groups and local Aboriginal communities to maintain basic facilities such as fire pits and signage, particularly in back-country areas.

To provide public access and entry to the signature site, two formal public (land) entry points will be permitted to promote continuation of back-country recreational activities in a remote setting. Development of these two public access points will depend on partnership arrangements with local communities and stakeholders, and funding.

A front-country recreation area and public entry point may be permitted at Minchin Lake adjacent to Highway 599, subject to further analysis during park management planning. This site would provide safe public access to the signature site and expand back-country travel possibilities. This site may include basic facilities such as a small parking area, a boat launch, garbage disposals, picnic tables, privies and some campsites. The design and construction of lakeshore projects will be compatible with the natural character of the area.

A second public entry point will be permitted to accommodate travelers approaching the signature site from roads to the south and west of the area. The access point could include parking and privies. To maintain the remote characteristics of the signature site and its waterways, this second point will be located outside the signature site. Visitors using this access point will enter the signature site using non-mechanized means via a water route or trail. The access point will be subject to the Ministry of Natural Resources' facility development requirements and procedures.

There are at least three trails leading into signature site waterways from informal access sites off Highway 599. One of these sites is in the locale of the prospective front-country recreation area, and will be improved and available for use should development be deemed favourable. The use of other access trails off Highway 599 will not be promoted. They will be left to natural regeneration or blocked to prevent public access where safety or park values are at risk. These sites will be examined during park and enhanced management area planning to determine appropriate management actions. Traditional water-based access points (i.e. via canoe routes) will be retained for use.

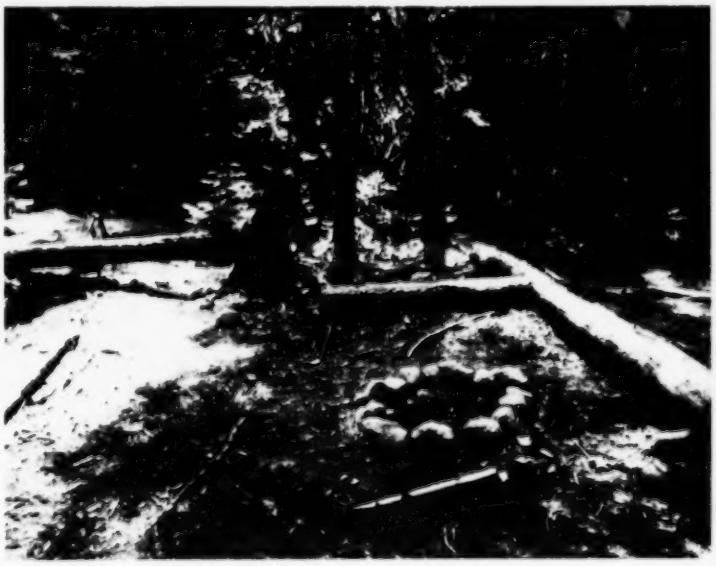
Enhancement or development of recreational facilities in the signature site may be considered by the Ministry of Natural Resources. This will be largely dependent on level of public use, funding and the development of an operating plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park. Should private or public partnership opportunities for funding, facility development and maintenance become available, proposals will be considered which maintain remote characteristics, and protect natural, cultural and wilderness values. The Ministry of Natural Resources will give priority consideration to proposals submitted by local Aboriginal communities.

The (maximum) 21-day Crown land camping policy will continue to apply in the signature site. Educational brochures, signage at strategic locations and increased enforcement efforts may be necessary for public awareness and compliance. If St. Raphael Provincial Park becomes operational, a fee structure for camping, and possibly for other activities in the park will be implemented.

The cutting of live wood for campfires or other purposes is not permitted in St. Raphael Provincial Park. In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, such harvesting may be authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources through the appropriate permitting process (i.e. Licence to Harvest Forest Resources for Personal Non-Consumptive Use).

To maintain remoteness, land use disposition for private recreation purposes including recreation camps and boat caches, will not be permitted in the signature site.

There are sensitive areas (e.g. woodland caribou calving areas, sensitive bird nesting sites, fish spawning sites, sensitive plant communities) in the signature site which may be easily impacted by human recreation activity and use. In St. Raphael Provincial Park, these sites will be identified and protected through careful planning of recreational and commercial development, the application of resource management policies, and monitoring. Recreational activities that may affect sensitive areas include camping, shore-lunch site use, hunting, fishing, motor boat use, snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle use, and aircraft landings. The park management plan will identify restrictions for any recreational activities within the park boundary. In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, low impact and non-consumptive recreational activities will be encouraged.



Information on cultural and natural values will be included in public educational material. This may take the form of interpretive information at access points, shore lunch sites, camping areas and/or portage trails, and in brochures or other material developed to inform and/or promote the signature site. Private sector partnerships (e.g. with naturalist groups, tourism operators, local businesses and municipalities) will be a key component of this initiative.

3.1.13 Tourism

The Ministry of Natural Resources recognizes that resource-based tourism is an important part of Ontario's tourism industry. Ecologically sustainable resource-based tourism operations can continue in St. Raphael Signature Site. There may be potential for diversified tourism opportunities in the signature site; particularly for non-consumptive, ecotourism type activities such as guided back-country canoeing, and natural and cultural interpretation and appreciation.

At the time St. Raphael Signature Site was established, there were 10 commercial tourism facilities with operations in the signature site approved under land use permits or Crown leases; as well as three authorized commercial tourism boat caches. One facility on private property was excluded from the signature site land-base; however operations are reliant on signature site resources.

The primary activity associated with these tourism operations is sport angling (see Section 3.1.7 for fisheries management strategies). There are also several regulated (black) Bear Management Areas in the signature site, some of which have been licenced to local tourism operators.

The overall intent for tourism in St. Raphael Signature Site is to ensure an ecologically sustainable and remote resource-based tourism industry.

Direction

Authorized tourism operations will be permitted to continue, provided there is resource capacity to support these activities and the quality of signature site values is maintained. Expansion or relocation of facilities may be considered when ecological, cultural, social and remote values of the signature site will not be negatively impacted. Facility expansion, upgrades or improvements must be designed to blend with the natural landscape, and must incorporate environmentally sensitive construction techniques and materials to the maximum extent possible. Use of renewable energy sources to operate tourism establishments is encouraged.

Where appropriate, enhanced land tenure may be considered for existing tourism operations within the signature site. Enhanced tenure (i.e. from land use permit to Crown lease) can increase business security for tourism operators and allow for expansion or improvement of services. Tourism operations will be inspected from time to time to ensure facilities are in conformity with conditions in tenure documents and with policies for the signature site. For the private property owner, private-land stewardship will be

encouraged to ensure operations are environmentally sound and sustainable, and are consistent with the final signature site strategy. New land sales will not be considered in the signature site.

The land and waterways of St. Raphael Signature Site offer a particular experience that can only be found in remote northern Ontario. Resource-based tourism operations offer opportunities for visitors to discover and experience the signature site. Development of new facilities may be considered where ecological, cultural, social and remote values are not negatively impacted. Non-consumptive activities, such as canoe guiding and cultural heritage appreciation is encouraged. Proposals for new operations must be supported by detailed resource information, and be included in a sound business plan which demonstrates direct and sustainable benefits to local communities, and provides a fair return to the Crown. Review of any proposal will include consultation with local stakeholders, Aboriginal communities and the general public.

Local Aboriginal people have expressed interest in developing resource-based tourism operations to generate economic benefits. Resource-based tourism potential in the vicinity of the signature site is being explored for ecological and economic feasibility. Economic development discussions and facilitation will continue with interested parties (see Section 1.8.5: Economic Opportunities for Aboriginal People).

An amendment to the St. Raphael Provincial Park management plan will be required for proposals not considered during park management planning. Proponents may be responsible for providing necessary funds for the plan amendment process including any necessary resource and/or recreational inventory requirements, and public consultation.

There are sensitive areas in the signature site which can be adversely impacted by human use (e.g. woodland caribou calving areas, nesting sites, fish spawning sites). Activities associated with tourism that may affect sensitive areas include shore-lunch site use, fishing and hunting, motor boat use, snowmobile use and aircraft landings. The park management plan will provide policies regarding activities in proximity to sensitive areas within the park boundary. Policies to address conflicts between user groups in the park will also be addressed in the park management plan.

Tourism proposals in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will be reviewed in consideration of signature site values.

Tourism operators access their facilities in the signature site predominantly by float plane. This means of access will be permitted to continue as per provincial park regulations and policies provided in the park management plan. One facility owner operates an airstrip within the park under the authority of a land use permit. Use of the airstrip may continue provided it does not impact signature site values. Use of trails and roads constructed by the forest or mining industries will not be available for motorized use by tourism operators or their guests.

To support resource management objectives in the signature site, reporting obligations for tourism operations will be examined as part of the fisheries scoping exercise (see Section 3.1.7: Fisheries). This may be carried out through requiring operators to supply inventory and client services information to the Ministry of Natural Resources when renewing permits or leases.

Use of Bear Management Areas may continue in the signature site. Operations in St. Raphael Provincial Park will be subject to conditions identified in the park management plan.

The cutting of live wood for campfires or other purposes is not permitted in St. Raphael Provincial Park. In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, such harvesting may be authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources through the appropriate permitting process (i.e. Licence to Harvest Forest Resources for Personal Non-Consumptive Use).

3.1.14 Vegetation Management

For the purposes of this preliminary strategy, vegetation management refers to the conservation and management of signature site ground flora.

Locally to provincially significant plant species and communities are found throughout the signature site, many associated with low-lying and shoreline areas. Provincially rare plant species have also been identified within St. Raphael Provincial Park. Old-growth red pine stands on Miniss and Hooker lakes are provincially significant, as they are growing at the northern extent of their native range. These stands are deteriorating and some are not regenerating, due in part to a lack of fire activity.

The overall intent regarding vegetation management in St. Raphael Signature Site is to protect rare, significant and sensitive vegetation species and communities, and to maintain the diversity and distribution of natural vegetation species and communities. Preventing the introduction and proliferation of non-native species will also be a focus.

Direction

Rare and significant vegetation species and communities exist within St. Raphael Provincial Park and will be protected through detailed park management planning. In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, identified sensitive and culturally important vegetation communities (e.g. known medicinal plant collection areas; patterned fen in east portion of the enhanced management area near Highway 599) will be considered during resource management planning. No ground disturbance will be permitted where threatened or endangered species exist. Conservation of ground (vegetation) cover will also be a priority, particularly where there is potential for erosion. Efforts will be made to incorporate traditional Aboriginal knowledge of vegetation into management planning. The Ministry of Natural Resources will ensure that rare, significant and sensitive vegetation species and communities are considered when reviewing proposals for commercial and recreational development and uses.

Many riparian[10] areas in the signature site are protected in St. Raphael Provincial Park. In the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, existing guidelines will be used to retain riparian vegetation. Where areas are identified to be sensitive and guidelines do not mitigate concerns, more conservative measures will be required (e.g. additional setbacks from sensitive wetland areas such as the patterned fen near Highway 599).

Non-native plant species are present on campsites, trails and other clearings in the signature site. Measures to deter and control the growth and spread of non-native species will be defined in the park and resource management plans with a focus on biological approaches.

3.1.14.1 Peat Resources

Prior to the establishment of St. Raphael Signature Site, there had been no expressed interest in commercial peat extraction in the signature site. Commercial peat extraction is not permitted in St. Raphael Signature Site.

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10 Riparian areas are areas adjacent to a stream or river with a high density, diversity and productivity of plant and animal species relative to nearby uplands

3.1.15 Water Resources

Maintaining water quality will be a priority in land use and water management decisions pertaining to St. Raphael Signature Site. Water quality conservation will be considered at a watershed level.

The Land Use Strategy describes water resources as an *"integral component of all land use area designations"*. The following water resource management objectives and considerations will be incorporated into land and water management in St. Raphael Signature Site:

- Protection and management of watersheds, headwaters and groundwater
- Evaluating and mitigating potential impacts of land and resource use on water quality
- Determining acceptable levels and types of landscape and shoreline alteration, and vegetation disturbance

Direction

Aquatic ecosystem health in the signature site area will be maintained through careful planning of land and resource uses (e.g. fuel storage areas) adjacent to streams, lakes and recharge areas. Development and site alteration will be restricted in or near sensitive surface and ground water features such that hydrological functions are protected. Water crossings in the signature site will be monitored for potential impacts to water quality (e.g. sedimentation), and deactivated once no longer required for industry purposes. Additional details will be supplied in the park and resource management plans where necessary.

The Ministry of the Environment has the mandate to protect water quality for public use and consumption. The Ministry of Natural Resources will play an important stewardship role through planning and monitoring potential pollution-source sites (e.g. development zones in the park). Increased commercial and recreational use of St. Raphael Signature Site may require more rigorous water quality monitoring and testing.

3.1.16 Wildlife

Wildlife diversity in the St. Raphael Signature Site area is typical of the boreal region of northwestern Ontario, with some species being rare or regionally uncommon. The signature site provides riparian, wetland and island environments important for critical life stages of some species of mammals and birds. The signature site provides habitat that may be important for certain species at risk in Ontario (e.g. forest-dwelling woodland caribou, wolverine, bald eagle).

The land use intent with respect to wildlife is to help ensure healthy wildlife populations and support protection of species at risk by sustainable management of resource and land uses in the signature site.

Direction

Wildlife species with stable populations are conserved through landscape level management (i.e. wildlife management units) and through local management actions (e.g. trap-line management). Wildlife management guidelines will be applied to activities in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Enhanced habitat protection strategies may be incorporated into the park and resource management plans for St. Raphael Signature Site.

Wildlife studies and species at risk research will continue in the signature site. Future resource management decisions will rely on thorough, accurate information on wildlife use and habitat needs, particularly with respect to rare and significant habitat. Traditional Aboriginal knowledge of wildlife use will be important in resource management planning for the signature site. This will involve encouraging participation of Aboriginal people in wildlife management activities, resource management planning, information gathering and analysis, and public education.

3.1.16.1 Woodland Caribou

As part of a larger, naturally changing landscape, St. Raphael Signature Site provides winter habitat for woodland caribou, as well as summer calving and nursery areas. Woodland caribou require a continuous supply of large and suitable summer and winter habitat. Management for this species is considered at a landscape level.

Woodland caribou habitat will be considered in management planning for St. Raphael Provincial Park through appropriate zoning and resource stewardship policies. The linear nature and protection of many lakes and riparian areas in St. Raphael Provincial Park naturally protect caribou travel corridors. Survey work and monitoring by the Ministry of Natural Resources will continue.

Woodland caribou conservation in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will be supported by the use of management guidelines, and any additional direction developed in the enhanced management area resource management plan. These may include operational timing windows, lower density and construction standards of roads, and requirements for deactivation of roads (see Section 3.1.10: Land-based Access). Protection of significant summer habitat will be a priority. Woodland caribou conservation education will be directed at recreational users and tourism operators in the signature site.

The province of Ontario is developing a recovery strategy for forest-dwelling woodland caribou. Recovery plans identify ways to manage and improve the status of species at risk and their habitat, and provide approaches to mitigate further decline. Where applicable, woodland caribou recovery requirements will be integrated into land use and resource management plans for St. Raphael Signature Site.

3.1.16.2 Wolverine

The wolverine is the largest member of the weasel family. It has been listed as a provincially threatened species due to habitat loss and over-harvesting. The Ontario Boreal Wolverine Project (commenced August 2002) is being conducted by the Wolverine Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada. The purpose of this research is to identify wolverine range in northwestern Ontario and make recommendations regarding the habitat needs of this species. When wolverine management guidelines are completed and approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources, they will be integrated into land use and resource management plans where applicable.

3.1.16.3 Bald Eagle

Bald eagles and their nesting sites were identified in the signature site. The bald eagle is a provincially endangered species. Bald eagles and their habitat are provided legal protection under Ontario's Endangered Species Act. Bald eagle habitat will be considered in management planning for St. Raphael Provincial Park and protected through appropriate zoning and resource stewardship policies. Bald eagle habitat conservation in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will be supported by the use of management guidelines, and any policy developed in the enhanced management area resource management plan. The Ministry of Natural Resources will also review all access management plans, work permit applications, land disposition requests and development proposals to ensure that bald eagle habitat is adequately protected in the signature site.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Preliminary Strategy Review

This St. Raphael Signature Site Preliminary Strategy is being provided to the public for review. A series of open houses will be conducted in local communities to deliver the preliminary strategy. Advice provided will be considered in the preparation of the final St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy.

The final St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy will provide broad direction for Crown land uses in the signature site. The signature site strategy will guide the development of a park management plan and an enhanced management area resource management plan. These documents will be completed after the final signature site strategy is approved.

Resource management plans for the signature site area must be consistent with direction in the signature site strategy. Direction in the final strategy may require amendments to resource management documents (e.g. forest management plans).

4.2 Implementation

The Ministry of Natural Resources will direct the implementation of the final St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy. Activities recommended or sanctioned in the final signature site strategy will be subject to the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act and other applicable legislation, policies and guidelines.

4.2.1 Action Statements

As noted throughout this preliminary strategy, management approaches have been put forward in order to achieve sustainable resource management, consistent with the vision for St. Raphael Signature Site. In total, twenty-three action items were produced at this stage of signature site planning, which are explained in the following section. These will be initiated:

- after the final St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy has been approved (e.g. fisheries scoping exercise),
- as required during park and resource management plan development (e.g. a front-country access area at Minchin Lake),
- once industry and (possibly) park operations are underway in the signature site (e.g. monitoring of water crossings),
- as partners come forward with proposals (e.g. maintenance of recreation facilities); and,
- as funding permits (e.g. production of information brochures).

Other management activities that have been articulated in this strategy will be elaborated on in subsequent resource management plans (e.g. road standards). Some direction items will be followed through on as part of other district resource planning (e.g. forest management planning).

Action items are as follows:

Education Opportunities

- The following education initiatives will be undertaken:
  - Production of a detailed St. Raphael Signature Site map
  - Provision of interpretive material at primary use areas and access points
  - Development of web-based information material
  - Provision of back-country trip planning guide and safety information
  - Other materials to promote signature site values and sustainable use of signature site resources (e.g. promote the use of lead-free fishing gear)

Inventory

- Trail information will be collected from existing users to support access management planning. Trail information will be held by the Sioux Lookout District Ministry of Natural Resources.
- Complete inventory of back-country campsites and shore lunch-sites.
- Continue wildlife habitat and landform vegetation information collection.
- Woodland caribou survey work will be continued to identify calving sites, wintering areas and travel patterns.

Monitoring, Enforcement and Safety

- Enforce and monitor road and trail use restrictions.
- Actively monitor water crossings and other potential point sources for pollution/sedimentation.
- Increase enforcement of the 21-day Crown land camping policy for Ontario residents.
- Monitor woodland caribou response to roads and forest operations associated with the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.
- Inspect tourism operations to ensure facilities are in conformity with provincial direction and policy, including direction in this strategy.
- Encourage private-land stewardship for tourism operator on Hooker Lake through discussion and correspondence.
- Assess traditional recreation access points (from Highway 599) for safety and accessibility; set up access controls where necessary.
- Close unauthorized trails; install access controls and conduct rehabilitation where necessary.

Partnerships

- Facilitate economic development opportunities for interested Aboriginal people in the signature site and surrounding area where the resources can support the proposed activity.
- Work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to locate, identify and document sites of cultural or traditional use significance prior to further commercial or recreational development.
- Seek not-for-profit partnerships with tourism operators, outdoor recreation groups and Aboriginal communities to assist with fisheries work.
- Seek partnerships with tourism operators, outdoor recreation groups and Aboriginal communities to maintain portages and basic facilities in front and back-country camping areas.

Resource Management and Development

- Conduct a fisheries scoping exercise to examine:
  - quantification and monitoring of the signature site sport fishery
  - collection of fisheries harvesting data
  - identification sensitive spawning areas
  - fisheries allocation
  - education opportunities on sustainable fisheries management and conservation approaches for tourism operators who have businesses on lakes that have low or decreasing fisheries capacity
  - the possibility of a business reporting framework for tourism operators
  - rehabilitation of fisheries habitat or populations
- Conduct a field evaluation of proposed park zones to ensure the adequate resource protection.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a small front-country recreation area at Minchin Lake.
- Explore development of a public access point outside the signature site.
- Permit or lease renewals for tourism camps will be examined and provisions added as necessary to ensure that operations conform to direction in the signature site strategy.
- When available, woodland caribou recovery guidelines and wolverine management guidelines will be integrated into local land use and resource management plans.

Completion of the projects and activities described in this strategy are dependent on the availability and allocation of funding in accordance with priorities established by the Ministry of Natural Resources' program areas, and the Government of Ontario. The Ministry of Natural Resources will pursue opportunities for partnerships with other agencies and interest groups in the funding and implementation of identified action items.

4.3 Strategy Amendments

The final St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy will be a dynamic tool, projecting forward for a 20-year period. Although there is no intention to carry out a comprehensive review of the final strategy at any prescribed interval, new or changed circumstances may require that the document be amended. Amendments will not alter the overall intent for St. Raphael Signature Site. Requests for amendments to the strategy may be made at any time by a member of the public, Aboriginal community, or public agency, and must have basis in fact, demonstrate a relationship to the scope of the signature site strategy, or must respond to changing resource conditions, new information, changed or new government policies.

Proposed amendments that alter or affect area-specific land use policies within the signature site will be subject to approved provincial amendment procedures. Amendments that are required to correct errors or omissions or to update information are administrative in nature, and will be processed following approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources Sioux Lookout District Manager and the Ontario Parks Northwest Zone Manager.

Other amendments to the strategy will be considered individually and may require public consultation if they have a significant social, economic or environmental impact. Approval will be required by the Regional Director, Field Services Division, Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Managing Director, Ontario Parks.

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Appendix A – Planning Participants

Project Team

Name	*Role in Strategy Development*
Ramona Szyska	Strategy Author
Jaime Hilbert	Parks Advisor
Magdalena Kowalczyk*	Research Assistant
Linda Anderson	GIS Support

Planning Team

Name	*Position or Representation*
Paul Bielby*	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Information Management Supervisor
Glenn Birch*	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Information Management Supervisor
Ramona Szyska	MNR Sioux Lookout District – District Planner
Jaime Hilbert	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Park Planner
Magdalena Kowalczyk*	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Signature Site Intern
Christine Friedrichsmeier	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Biology
Bob Paterson	MNR Sioux Lookout District – North Area Supervisor
Joe Muli	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Lands
Steve Allen*	MNR Sioux Lookout District – Forestry
Donna Smith	Ministry of Natural Resources – Communications
Wayne Moxam	Ministry of Natural Resources – Fire Management
Fred Richardson	Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
Andreas Lichtblau*	Ministry of Northern Development and Mines – Geology
Peter Hinz	Ministry of Northern Development and Mines – Geology
Frank Bastone	Ministry of Northern Development and Mines – Tourism
John Derouin	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
Londa Mortson	Northwest Regional Planning office
Evan Simpson	Northwest Regional Planning office
Julie Sullivan	Ontario Parks Northwest Zone office
Scott Ellery	Provincial Park Development and Operations

* Denotes participants formerly active during development of the Preliminary Strategy

Advisory Committee

Name	*Affiliation/Representation*
Allan Lago	Anglers and Hunters
Mary Kenny	Environment
Ted Frisby	Forestry
Michael Quince	Local Citizens Committee
Allan Best	Mining
Robert Briskett	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
John Derouin	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
Tom Waasaykeesic	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
Kathy Poling	Municipality of Sioux Lookout
George Seaton	Township of Pickle Lake
Ernie Leschied	Resource Harvesting
Tom Terry	Tourism – Back-country
Jacob Latto	Tourism – Facility-based

Appendix B – Summary of Public Consultation from St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document

1.0 Project:	2.0 OLL Land Use Strategy Area #:	3.0 MNR District:
St. Raphael Signature Site – Issues and Options Document Stage	St. Raphael Provincial Park (P2287) Miniss Enhanced Management Area (E2283a)	Sioux Lookout

4.0 Public and Aboriginal Consultation

4.1 Public Consultation

Summarize the nature of the Signature Site Issues and Options consultation for St. Raphael Signature Site.

- The advisory committee reviewed the document on October 26th – 27th and November 5th – 6th, 2004.
- 350 Signature Site Issues and Options Documents were sent out in the mail on November 29th, 2004.
- Approximately 6 Signature Site Issues and Options packages were returned with change address, or unknown address marked on the envelope.
- Signature Site Issues and Options packages included: one Signature Site Issues and Options Document and a letter from the Information Management Supervisor indicating that comments on the document would be accepted until January 10th, 2005. The letter also provided a link to the Signature Site Issues and Options Document EBR posting.
- The mailing list included: mandatory regional contacts, Ontario Parks mandatory contact list, extracts from the Caribou Forest FMP mailing list, interest groups, individuals who have expressed interest in the signature site and land tenure holders.
- A Release of the Signature Site Issues and Options Document newspaper advertisement was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin on November 17th, 2004 and November 24th, 2004; in the Wawatay on November 18th, 2004; and the Ignace Driftwood on November 17th, 2004.
- 350 Get Involved! postcards were mailed on November 16th, 2004 outlining Open House dates and details
- Mailboxes in Pickle Lake, Savant Lake and Mishkeegogamang on November 17th, 2004 were given a flyer outlining Open House dates.
- A display was put up in the Sioux Lookout Public Library on November 15th, 2004 to increase community awareness of the project and the upcoming open houses.
- Contacted Theodore Mishenene-Radio Station Manager (faxed) at the Mishkeegogamang radio station with an announcement message for the Open Houses in the community.
- Open Houses were held in: Mishkeegogamang on December 2nd, 2004 at the community center and December 8th, 2004 in the Safe House both from 9am to 1pm, Pickle Lake on December 1st, 2004 and December 7th, 2004 from 6pm to 9pm in the community centre, Savant Lake on December 3rd, 2004 and December 9th, 2004 from 6pm to 9pm in Savant Lake Public School and Sioux Lookout on December 2nd, 2004 and December 8th, 2004 in the Knights of Columbus Hall from 6pm to 9pm.
- Attendance totals for the Open Houses (not including MNR and advisory committee members) were as follows: Pickle Lake 8, Mishkeegogamang 8; Sioux Lookout 19 and Savant Lake 10.

- At the first Open House in each community the Signature Site Issues and Options Document was presented by the project team. The second Open House held the following week was a session to provide the public with the opportunity to examine the Issues and Options Document more closely and ask questions of the project team.
- EBR was posted on November 26th, 2004. Public review period began November 26th, 2004 and ended on January 10th, 2005.
- 14 Response Booklets and 11 letters were received during the 45 day public review period.

Summary of Significant Issues:

The following questions and comments are a summary of the responses gathered from the Signature Site Issues and Options stage.

- Logging within the signature site should not be allowed.
- The area is a remote wilderness area and it should be kept that way.
- Access to the area for the public should not be increased.
- Limiting public access to and within the signature site will result in decreased economic benefits for the local area.
- How successful will access restriction measures be? How will the MNR monitor access? What alternatives are available if access restriction measures are not working?
- Woodland caribou habitat will be destroyed by logging activities in the EMA.
- Environment is under-represented on the advisory committee and there is no environmental representation on the Planning Team.
- Signature site should be left as a remote roadless area.
- Concern over ATV and snowmobile use on logging roads.
- Disturbance of forest cover will contribute to a shift in bird species.
- Establishment of green corridors to link protected areas and sustain healthy wildlife populations should be considered.
- Expansion of tourist lodges within the park/EMA should be limited.
- New tourism lodges should be placed outside the park/EMA.
- Roads within the park/EMAs should be destroyed and restored.
- There is a failure to recognize that ecological integrity should be the first priority in provincial park management.
- Motorboat use should be limited.
- Signature site strategy should determine how to best buffer the signature site from negative impacts of activities outside its boundary.
- There should be no major development in the signature site.
- The provincial importance of the signature site has not been taken into account in the planning process.
- Boundary issues presented at earlier stages were ignored. Boundaries for the park should be reconsidered based on ecological criteria.
- Road development and logging will threaten cultural, historical and recreational sites.
- A comprehensive study of cultural and historical sites in the Signature Site should be completed before any development occurs.
- Access points for the public to enter the park for canoeing/camping should be developed.
- Land/water based access to the park from the west and south suitable for motorboat use should be developed.
- The Issues and Options Document set out objectives which are inconsistent with the LUS and could result in additional constraints on Industry.

Ministry response to the issues documented above.

- Comments and recommendations received during the Signature Site Issues and Options stage will be considered during the development of the Preliminary Signature Site Strategy and the St. Raphael Provincial Park Issues and Options phase of the planning process.
- A generic response to every letter received at the Signature Site Issues and Options stage was prepared by the district office.
- The 14 Response Booklets received were analyzed internally.

4.2 Aboriginal Consultation

Details of Aboriginal Consultation:

Summary of Aboriginal Consultation:

- Open House meetings were held in Mishkeegogamang on December 2nd, 2004 in the community center and December 8th, 2004 in the Safe House both from 9am to 1pm.
- Mailboxes in Mishkeegogamang were provided with Open House advertisement flyers on November 17th, 2004.
- Contacted Theodore Mishenene-Radio Station Manager (faxed) at the Mishkeegogamang radio station with an announcement message for the Open Houses in the community
- On the request of Mishkeegogamang, a letter was sent to Chief Roundhead on December 15th, 2004 explaining that the Signature Site will not affect any of their Treaty and Constitutional Rights.

Summary of Significant Issues:

Summary of significant issues during the Aboriginal consultation process

- A petition on behalf of Mishkeegogamang First Nation was submitted to Roger Valley, MP with regards to St. Raphael Signature Site and Provincial Park. Two hundred and eighteen names appeared on the petition.
- On January 10, 2005, the final day of public comment on the Signature Site Issues and Options Document a peaceful First Nation protest rally regarding the St. Raphael Signature Site Planning Process was held at the Sioux Lookout MNR District Office.
- The rally included approximately 110 First Nation People including 20 children from the First Nations of Mishkeegogamang, Cat Lake, The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen, Wunnumin and Lac Seul. Participants of note included Chief Roundhead from Mishkeegogamang, Chief Machimity from The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen, a number of councilors from The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen, Cat Lake and Mishkeegogamang First Nations.
- Erin Bottle of Mishkeegogamang provided opening remarks which included: the process is flawed, no consultation, decisions affecting their trap lines and treaty area were made without their input, accusations of polluting water, chasing away wildlife, and killing fish, accusations of MNR not listening to First Nation views or interests, MNR working with multi-national corporations 'in their pockets'.
- Chief Roundhead indicated that the Ministry's approach to consultation does not work for First Nations, and suggested that he would provide MNR with an alternative process, more suitable to the people for Mishkeegogamang.
- Chief Machimity from The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen then spoke, advising that he had spoken to his band lawyer, and that the MNR would be receiving direction from the lawyer to stop the signature site.
- Increased concern regarding aerial spraying in the EMAs and on a The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen's trapline area.

Ministry response to the issues documented above.

- Comments and recommendations received during the Signature Site Issues and Options stage will be considered during the development of the Preliminary Signature Site Strategy and the St. Raphael Provincial Park Issues and Options phase of the planning process.
- Mishkeegogamang has three seats on the Advisory Committee and participates actively in the meetings. They were instructed by their Chief Council not to vote on issues arising.
- The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen has a seat on the Advisory Committee available to them but have not filled the seat.
- At each stage of the signature site planning process, a set of Open Houses was held in the community of Mishkeegogamang.

- An invitation to hold open houses in the community of The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen was extended at the Signature Site Issues and Options stage but not accepted.
- The MNR is willing to work with Firsts Nation communities to obtain input and explore a new consultation process as identified by First Nations to be more suitable.

5.0 Recommendations

Future Planning:

Issues raised during public or Aboriginal consultation which need to be addressed in future planning for this area include:

- Public access (e.g., ATV, snowmobile, motorboat, motor vehicle, canoe, air)
- Commercial access (e.g., forestry, mining, tourism)
- Water quality
- Canoe route management
- Garbage disposal
- Tourism activities
- Forestry/mining activities in the EMA
- Utility corridors
- Management of activities on adjacent lands
- Ecological integrity
- Vegetation management (e.g., aerial spraying, fire management, invasive species)
- Fisheries management (e.g., allocation of resource, potential over-allocation, lack of information)
- Wildlife management (e.g., protection of caribou and wolverine habitat)
- Aboriginal use of the Signature Site (e.g., traditional activities, economic development, involvement in planning process)
- Cultural resource protection (e.g., use of traditional knowledge, protection of sites, collection of information)

6.0 Approval of Consultation Documentation

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Fax (807) 737-1813

Ontario Parks Contact Person:
Julie Sullivan
Regional Parks Planner
Phone (807) 475-1282
Fax (807) 475-1499

Al Mathews
District Manager
Sioux Lookout District
Date: April 6th, 2005

Tim Sullivan
Northwest Zone Manager
Ontario Parks
Date: March 23rd, 2005

Appendix C – Resolution of Requests for Individual Environmental Assessment

The Ministry of the Environment forwarded correspondence to the Ministry of Natural Resources on February 17, 2005, providing a decision on the *requests for individual environmental assessment* (commonly referred to as 'bump-up' requests) submitted by stakeholder and interest groups on July 18, 2002. These 'bump-up' requests were in regards to forestry operations proposed by Bowater Canadian Forest Products Incorporated, in St. Raphael Signature Site.

There was particular concern about the forestry operations proposed in the Koala Block (forest block in the west portion of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area) for the 2002 to 2007 planning period, in the absence of a strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site and management plans for St. Raphael Provincial Park and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. While these 'bump-up' requests were under review, the Ministry of Natural Resources requested and received permission from the Ministry of the Environment to allow construction of a primary forestry access road (Kiwi Road) to proceed to provide access to timber allocations in proximity to the signature site.

The Ministry of the Environment ruled that an individual environmental assessment for forestry activities in the signature site was not required. The Ministry of Natural Resources was ordered to complete the signature site planning process prior to allowing forest management operations in St. Raphael Signature Site.

Revision of the 2002 to 2022 Caribou Forest Management Plan will be required, if planned operations conflict with approved management strategies developed through the signature site planning exercise.

St Raphael Signature Site

Figure 1

Legend

- Mainbase Lodge/Outpost – Crownland
- Mainbase Lodge/Outpost – Patent Land

St Raphael Signature Site

- St Raphael Provincial Park
- Enhanced Management Area
- Selected Industry Access Point
- Canoe Route
- Portage
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road
- Wabakimi Provincial Park
- Forest Management Unit Boundary
- First Nation

Scale: 1:300,000

N

Ontario

Ontario Parks

Mishkeegogamang (Osnaburgh)

Djibway Nation of Saugeen

599

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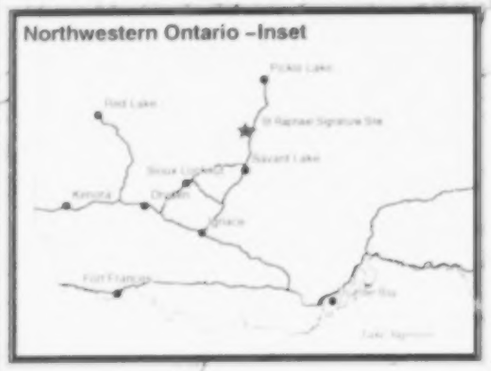

St Raphael Signature Site

Figure 1

Legend

- Mainbase Lodge/Outpost – Crownland
- Mainbase Lodge/Outpost – Patent Land

St Raphael Signature Site

- St Raphael Provincial Park
- Enhanced Management Area
- Selected Industry Access Point
- Canoe Route
- Portage
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road
- Wabakimi Provincial Park
- Forest Management Unit Boundary
- First Nation

Scale: 1:300,000

N

Ontario

Ontario Parks

Pour obtenir de l'aide en français,
veuillez communiquer avec le ministère –
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